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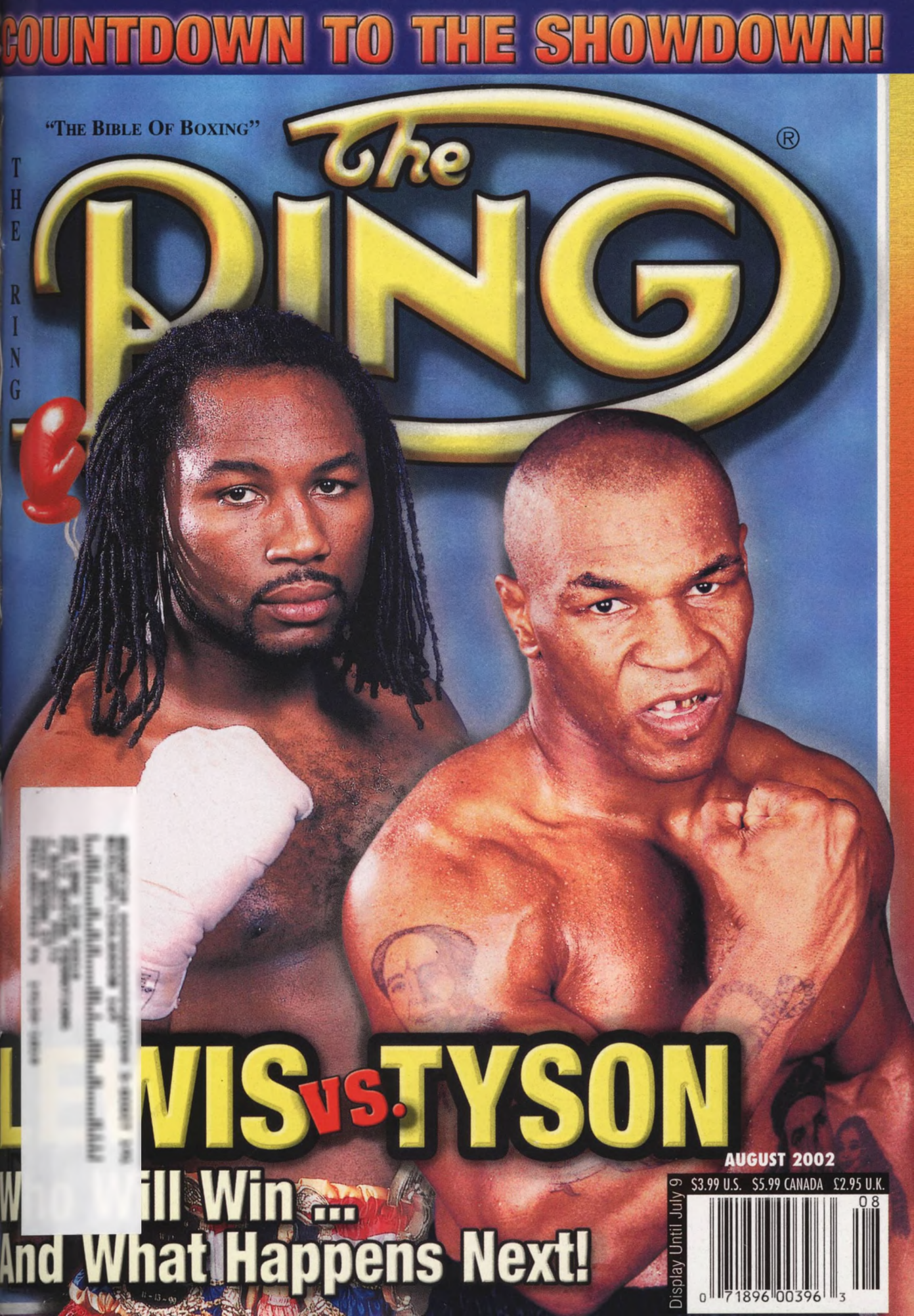

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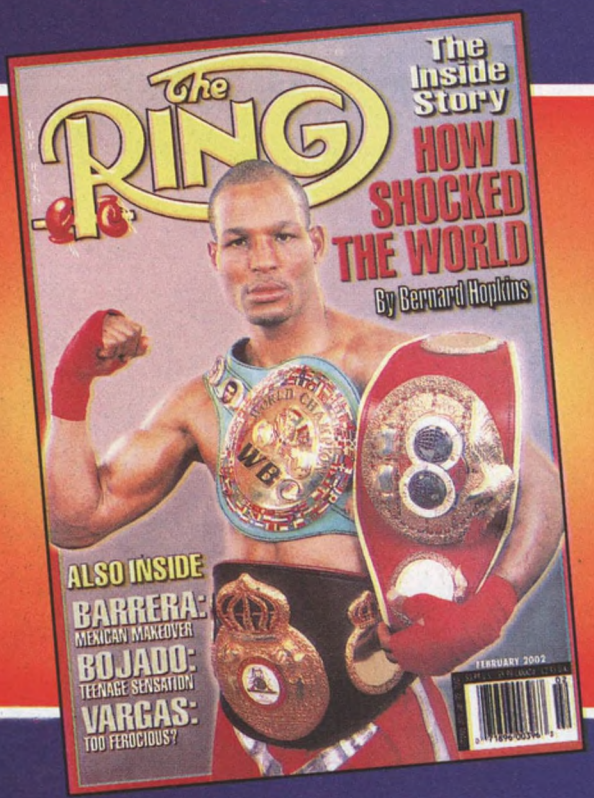

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RINGSIDE

We won't know for sure until both fighters are in the ring, but as I write this in late-March, it looks like the long anticipated showdown between heavyweight champion Lennox Lewis and Mike Tyson is actually going to happen. Probably in Memphis, Tennessee. Probably on June 8.

It's the sort of fight where practically anything can happen, and this issue's cover story, "Lewis vs. Tyson: Who Will Win … And What Happens Next" *(page 24)*, explores a number of possible scenarios and their ramifications. It's the kind of in-depth analysis that's sure to give readers plenty to think about between now and the opening bell. And when that bell rings, it will signal not only the start of perhaps the richest prize fight in history, but also a victory for boxing and the free-enterprise system.

Not since the bare-knuckle era, when boxing was illegal, have so many powerful forces aligned themselves against a match. Politicians of every stripe rushed to denounce it; journalists hacked out countless columns condemning it; civic groups voiced strident opposition. The prolonged search for a venue, following Nevada's refusal to grant Tyson a boxing license, would have been funny if it wasn't for its chilling resemblance to the hunt for a home for the second Muhammad Ali-Sonny Liston fight.

But despite all the obstacles, the match was made, and the reason it was made is because enough fans wanted to see it that those who figure to profit from the fight were willing to go through hell to get it done.

It doesn't matter whether you're overjoyed that the fight is finally going to happen, or appalled that a man like Tyson is still allowed to box, you have to admit that the making of Lewis-Tyson is a tribute to the power of the boxing consumer.

Yes, it's all about money—your money. But there's nothing the matter with that if you're buying something you want. All too often, boxing fans are force-fed fights they have little or no interest in, basically because it's good for business, someone else's business.

The lesson of the making of Lewis-Tyson should not be forgotten. The same economic clout that prevailed against the odds in this instance can be wielded in support of other desirable matches, or withheld when a fight is made we don't want to see. It works both ways.

True, Lewis-Tyson is an extreme case, but sometimes it takes an extreme case to prove a point. And the point here is that the rules of the market place still prevail—even in boxing.

***

When we announced THE RING's new championship policy in the April 2002 issue, only four of the 17 weight classes had genuine champions. Despite almost unanimous support from readers, some wanted THE RING to abandon the established criteria for filling the vacancies, and simply make the number-one contender the champion in every division. Knowing that such a course of action would ultimately weaken the legitimacy of our goal of having one genuine champion atop each division, we resisted the temptation. True championships are won in the ring, not at an editor's desk.

Since the April issue, two of the vacancies have been filled, and by the time you read this, two more should have been filled, with another to be decided in the near future. With a little bit of luck—no postponements or draws—we should have a total of nine by the end of June. That will mean we're more than halfway there. So bear with us; something worthwhile is always worth waiting for.

Nigel Collins
Editor-in-Chief

Volume 81, No. 9 August 2002

The Ring

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ROUND ONE

PRESENTED WITH PROBLEMS

Five-year-old promotional company America Presents is locked in a bitter battle for survival plagued by financial woes and a series of debilitating lawsuits with many of its most prominent fighters. But the company seems to have increased its hopes for continued existence by entering into a co-promotional agreement with Cedric Kushner Promotions in late-March. The proven success of Kushner could translate into America Presents staying afloat, while CKP benefits by gaining the promotional rights to at least 14 of America Presents' top fighters.

America Presents had failed to pay Vice President Fred Sternburg his bi-weekly paychecks for three consecutive pay periods, and he left the company on March 15. Once his departure became public knowledge, so did a host of other financial problems America Presents is facing.

PHOTO BY FRANK VITUCCI

The future is in doubt for Tinley and America Presents

It has bounced numerous checks, including a $20,000 check to Wayne McCullough for his fight on January 12 against Alvin Brown. America Presents owner Mat Tinley finally wired McCullough $20,000 on March 12, but McCullough's wife, Cheryl, said he owes more. She said Tinley made a side deal with her to accept a lower than agreed upon purse as a way to keep heavyweight David Tua—who was originally supposed to appear on the same card—from knowing that McCullough was making more than he was. Cheryl said her husband was supposed to make $30,000, but said Tinley asked her to agree to a $20,000 contract price plus a $10,000 bonus payable within 10 days.

Consultant Pat Putnam, a long-time *Sports Illustrated* writer, said he is owed $9,000, a debt due since last October. America Presents also reportedly owes money to other promotional companies.

Top Rank's Todd duBoef said his company paid a $13,000 debt owed by America Presents to DiBella Entertainment so that DBE would agree to put the Juan Manuel Marquez-Robbie Peden fight on its March 9 card in Pittsburgh. Marquez is promoted by Top Rank and Peden by America Presents, but DBE President Lou DiBella was refusing to put an America Presents fighter on his card until the company paid off a debt to him from a July 6, 2001, show. Top Rank paid the fee, duBoef said, because it thought it was important to get Marquez on that HBO card.

Because of the controversy surrounding the series of outstanding debts and bounced checks, Jeff Fried, the company's general counsel, had to take the unprecedented step of personally guaranteeing the boxers' purses for an ESPN show on March 21 and an ESPN2 show on March 22. Fried said the figure was approximately $150,000.

CKP indicated it would not help take care of America Presents' debts, but Kushner will at least be able to keep their co-promoted fighters active.

"I think we'll be able to do a lot for these fighters, and I think they'll do a lot for us," Kushner said. "It's a great scenario."

Tinley said America Presents has been hurt because it was not paid its promoter's fee of $900,000 from Mike Tyson from his fight with Brian Nielsen. America Presents' tenure promoting Tyson never produced the big bucks the company expected, and with the added misfortune of so many of its top fighters—Tua, David Reid, Joel Casamayor, and now Hector Camacho Jr.—suffering major defeats the last couple of years, it's no wonder that the company has been fighting for its life.

Time will tell if Kushner can help them win that fight.

—Kevin Iole

TITO LECTOURE, 1936-2002

When Juan Carlos "Tito" Lectoure died of heart disease in March, Argentina lost the most powerful figure in the country's boxing history. With his passing, the Sweet Science also lost a class act, as Lectoure's reputation as both a tremendous promoter and a charming gentleman was unchallenged throughout the industry.

Lectoure, who promoted his first show at age 20, was the nephew of Pepe Lectoure, the co-founder of Luna Park, Argentina's equivalent of Madison Square Garden. But it was under Tito's guidance that the venue became the home of champions. He promoted 24 world title bouts there, 18 South American championships, and 87 matches for the Argentine title.

Among the prominent fighters Lectoure helped develop were Carlos Monzon, Victor Galindez, Nicolino Locche, Hugo Corro, Horacio Accavallo, Santos Laciar, Sergio Palma, and Juan Coggi. But it was Monzon that brought him his greatest success, and Monzon's 1971 defense against Emile Griffith in front of 23,000 fans at Luna Park (the first ever middleweight championship bout held in South America) is generally considered Lectoure's crowning achievement.

Despite his courtly manner, Lectoure ruled Argentine boxing as if it was his own personal fiefdom. Hall of Fame trainer Angelo Dundee recalls taking then-WBA heavyweight king Jimmy Ellis to Buenos Aires for a fight that was going to be promoted by somebody other than Lectoure.

"Here I was with a world champion, and I couldn't get a word in the papers. And we couldn't train at the Luna Park Gym," said Dundee. "Tito was the man down there, and you couldn't get anything done without him. We finally went home without fighting. But you couldn't meet a nicer man than Lectoure, and we became good friends."

In 1987, with Argentine boxing in the doldrums, Lectoure closed the Luna Park Gym, and spent more and more of his time booking ballet, ice skating, and musical shows into the famous arena. But he never lost his love for boxing, and was delighted when he was inducted into the International Boxing Hall of Fame in 2001.

"It was a big deal for Argentina," said Dundee. "They sent a TV crew, and I did a one-hour show with him that was shown in Argentina."

Lectoure: Hall of Fame promoter dies

With the glory days of Argentine boxing seemingly a thing of the past—Julio Pablo Chacon, Marcelo Dominguez, and Jorge Castro are the *only* Argentine boxers currently rated by THE RING—it's unlikely the country will ever see the likes of Lectoure again. He now takes his place alongside Tex Rickard, Mike Jacobs, George Parnassus, Herman Taylor, and all the other great promoters who have gone the way of the 15-round title bouts and the eight traditional weight classes.

—Nigel Collins

JUDGE TATTOOES NEVADA COMMISSION

Score one for free speech, common sense, and the rights of fighters, over hypocrisy, greed, and the interests of the establishment. The Nevada State Athletic Commission's effort to ban the temporary tattoos boxers have been wearing on their backs in recent months has failed, as Clark County District Court Judge Valerie Vega ruled on March 6 that the NSAC's attempted ban violated the fighters' First Amendment rights.

The NSAC was asserting that temporary tattoos would be a distraction to judges during bouts, conveniently overlooking the fact that numerous fighters over the years have covered their bodies with permanent tattoos and yet caused judges no particular disturbance. The "distraction" allegation seemed little more than a thinly veiled excuse to prevent online casinos such as GoldenPalace.com from advertising at fights hosted by Las Vegas' physical casinos, but Judge Vega wasn't buying it, finding no evidence that temporary body markings would be a distraction or would be "demeaning to the sport of boxing," as the NSAC insisted. This ruling will allow fighters to continue to earn five- and six-figure paydays to wear the advertisements.

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

The temporary tattoos aren't going anywhere

"It's a victory for free speech, and a victory for boxers everywhere," said Paul Larsen, attorney for GoldenPalace.com and for junior featherweight contender Bones Adams, whose desire to wear a tattooed advertisement for his February 23 bout with Paulie Ayala in Las Vegas brought the case to the fore. "This is simply a new form of advertising. Boxers have a short career, and choosing to wear these tattoos adds to their income opportunities. This is a valuable decision because the ban violated boxers' rights. Now those rights are being protected."

—Eric Raskin

TV FIGHTS OF THE MONTH

DATE	WINNER/LOSER	NETWORK	DIVISION	SIGNIFICANCE	MATCHUP	RESULT
3-1-02	Gary Balletto KO 9 Mike DiBenedetto	ESPN2	l	C-	B+	C-
Good comeback by Balletto, who early on was eating right hands like Mike Rossman						
3-1-02	**Eric Lucas W 12 Vinny Paz**	**ESPN2**	**WBC sm**	**B+**	**D+**	**C-**
Paz got it all wrong; he should've played a couple of quarters of basketball before the fight						
3-1-02	Miguel Cotto KO 2 Sammy Sparkman	Telef	jw	C+	D-	C
Another blowout for Cotto; with Bojado's loss, is he the top prospect?						
3-2-02	Denis Bakhtov KO 5 Mathew Ellis	Show	h	D+	B	C-
Butterbean just booked a flight to the U.K.						
3-2-02	Tony Oakey W 12 Kostya Shvets	Show	lh	C-	C+	D+
Danny Bonaduce destroys either of these guys						
3-9-02	Juan Manuel Marquez KO 10 Robbie Peden	HBO	f	B+	B+	B
The best on-camera barf since Larry Holmes sprayed ringsiders at the end of his fight with Holyfield						
3-9-02	**Paul Spadafora W 12 Angel Manfredy**	**HBO**	**IBF l**	**A**	**A-**	**C**
Is there anything more annoying than watching a guy who clearly lost act like he's won?						
3-10-02	Tim Witherspoon KO 2 Darroll Wilson	FOXSN	h	C	C	B-
Someday we're going to read that Witherspoon knocked out his nursing home attendant with an overhand right						
3-15-02	Tokunbo Olajide KO 4 Trevor Brown	ESPN2	jm	C+	D+	C+
Olajide looks like the goods, but where are the jeri curls?						
3-15-02	Golden Johnson KO 11 Chantel Stanciel	ESPN2	w	C+	B	B-
Stanciel not bad, but Johnson a little too strong, too experienced						
3-16-02	Carlos Vilches KO 7 Scott DePompe	Show	jw	C	B+	B+
Vilches gets off canvas to cut DePompe to ribbons in good action fight						
3-16-02	Emmanuel Lucero W 12 Frankie Archuleta	Show	jf	C+	A-	B+
Remember this first round in December when considering your Round of the Year picks						
3-16-02	Antonio Margarito KO 10 Antonio Diaz	Show	w	B+	A+	A-
Magnificent slugfest; Margarito may be the world's most underrated fighter						
3-16-02	Daniel Santos KO 11 Yory Boy Campas	Show	jm	B	B+	B-
You can't say Santos doesn't have heart; Campas had him going, but he hung in there						
3-17-02	Corey Sanders KO 8 Oleg Maskaev	FOXSN	h	C+	B+	C
This is the same guy who took Hasim Rahman's right hands all night long?						
3-21-02	Omar Weis W 10 Hector Camacho Jr.	ESPN	w	B-	B+	B-
We can't think of two guys more deserving of this outcome; good for both of them						
3-22-02	Orlando Salido W 10 Lamont Pearson	ESPN2	jl	C+	C-	B+
Upset! Salido's powerpunching overcomes Pearson's sharper skills						
3-22-02	James Toney W 10 Sione Asipeli	ESPN2	h	C+	D+	C-
Just imagine if Roy Jones had Toney's attitude						
3-22-02	Jesus Chavez KO 3 Gerardo Zayas	Telef	jl	B+	C-	C+
Target practice for Chavez; how about a match against Casamayor with the winner vs. Freitas?						

Category Explanation: "Significance"—The importance of the bout to the division and the fighters' futures; "Matchup"—The quality of the fighters and the prefight determination of how their styles will mesh; "Result"—How the bout turned out, from the viewer's perspective.

(World/Alphabet title fights in **bold** type)

Division key: h—heavyweight; c—cruiserweight; lh—light heavyweight; sm—super middleweight; m—middleweight; jm—junior middleweight; w—welterweight; jw—junior welterweight; l—lightweight; jl—junior lightweight; f—featherweight; jf—junior featherweight; b—bantamweight; jb—junior bantamweight; fl—flyweight; jfl—junior flyweight; s—strawweight

Network key: PPV—Pay-Per-View; Show—Showtime; FOXSN—Fox SportsNet; Uni—Univision; Telem—Telemundo, Telef—Telefutura

KID AZTECA, 1913-2002

Azteca in his fighting days, and in his later years (inset)

Many of the details about the fighting career of Luis Villanueva Paramo, better known as "Kid Azteca," are uncertain. His final record, the number of times he defended the Mexican welterweight title, in what year he turned pro—all are subject to debate. But one thing that isn't is Azteca's standing as one of the true legends of Mexican boxing, thanks in large part to the incredible longevity that saw him fight for more than 30 years. He also boasted longevity outside the boxing ring, living to the age of 88 before liver and kidney problems finally claimed his life in his native Mexico City on March 16.

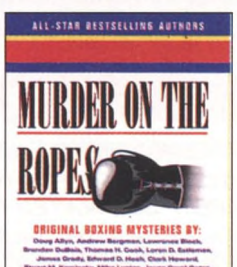
Villanueva Paramo took his ring name when he came in as a late substitute for a fighter named Kid Azteca in a 1931 bout, won impressively, and decided to hold on to the appellation. Most of the other details about the early stages of his career, however, are murky. *The Ring Record Book* says he turned pro in 1929, but the specifics on his roughly 50 fights between then and '31 are unknown. From '32 on, he compiled a record of 150-38-8 (83) with 1 no-decision, according to our files, but elsewhere Azteca has been listed as having anywhere from 65 to 199 wins. All sources agree he won the Mexican welterweight title as a 19-year-old by defeating David Velasco in October '32, but whereas some claim he defended that belt an incredible 60 times over the next 17 years, *The Ring Record Book* shows that he made two successful defenses (and won dozens of non-title fights), lost the belt to Rodolfo Ramirez in '45, and won it back from Nicolas Moran in '48 before relinquishing it in '49.

Either way, it's an extraordinary record, and it includes knockout wins for the hard-hooking Mexican over former world champions Fritzie Zivic and Ceferino Garcia. Azteca was offered one shot at the world welterweight title, against Jimmy McLarnin in Los Angeles, but he turned it down because he didn't want to leave his beloved native land for as long as he would have had to for that fight.

After his boxing career finally ended in '61, Azteca had some success as an actor in Mexican films. The ageless great was inducted into the California-based World Boxing Hall of Fame in '92.

—Eric Raskin

THE BOXING BOOKSHELF



Like some half-forgotten pug with dreams of one more crack at the title, boxing fiction is on the comeback trail. First there was Eddie Muller's well-received whodunit, *The Distance*, which was reviewed in the June 2002 issue of THE RING. Now comes *Murder On The Ropes* (New Millennium Press, 381 pages, $24.95), a collection of original boxing mysteries, edited by Otto Penzler. A different author wrote each of 14 short stories, and as one might expect, most of them deal with the seamy side of the Sweet Science. Fixes and double-crosses fly almost as fast as fists.

While there's not a clinker among Penzler's thoughtful selections, "The Man Who Fought Roland LaStarza" by Joyce Carol Oates stands out like a Hall of Famer among a group of contenders. On one level it's the story of Colum Donaghy, a popular Irish-American brawler who gets an unexpected shot at the big time. But in Oates' masterful hands, it becomes a multi-layered tale that explores, among other themes, the charismatic appeal of fighters and how it affects the people who love them.

While none of the other pieces approach Oates' contribution, there's plenty of highly readable material. New York *Daily News* columnist Mike Lupica's "Dream Street" is an insightful and suspenseful look at the lasting relationship between legendary opponents. Like many of the writers included in this collection, Lupica uses real life boxing people to add authenticity to his narrative. In Lupica's case, it's *Daily News* colleague Bill Gallo, while Archie Moore plays a pivotal role in Stuart M. Kaminsky's "Long Odds."

The best entries go beyond the give-and-take of the ring in search of the human drama. "The Trial Horse" by former boxer Clark Howard gives dignity to the members of boxing's underclass, and "A Winning Combination" by Brendan DuBois probes the frequently unspoken connection between boxing and fear.

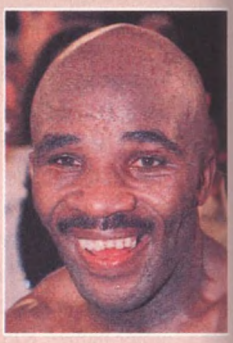
While I don't believe a boxing novel has ever topped the best-seller list or won a major literary award, *Murder On The Ropes* proves that as long as writers of quality fiction are enamored with the topic, boxing fiction will remain a viable and enjoyable genre.

—Nigel Collins

OUTSIDE THE ROPES

Rahman: Bodies found in car

Legal suits are flying as a result of one ring tragedy and one near-tragedy that occurred last year. The family of **Beethavean Scottland**, who died following his TKO loss to **George Jones** last June, filed a suit in early-March against the New York State Athletic Commission, asserting that the fighter's death could have been prevented. Also, former heavyweight titleholder **Greg Page**, who was seriously injured in his March '01 loss to **Dale Crowe** at Peel's Palaces in Kentucky, filed a suit in early-March against the promoter, the ringside physician, the owners of the venue, and eight members of the Kentucky Athletic Commission for alleged negligence ... Former heavyweight champion **Hasim Rahman** was indirectly implicated in a tragedy in Baltimore, Maryland, in late-February, when two people were found shot to death in "The Rock's" 1999 Infiniti Q 45. **Oliver L. McCaffity Jr.**, an employee of Rahman's who was helping the ex-champ set up a clothing line (and who had a history of drug trafficking), and **Lisa Renee Brown**, a friend of McCaffity's, were found shot in the head in the front seat of the wrecked car. Investigators said they didn't believe Rahman had anything to do with the shootings ... Former lightweight and junior lightweight titleholder **Joey Gamache** filed a $5.5-million suit against the New York State Athletic Commission in mid-March, accusing the NYSAC of allowing opponent **Arturo Gatti** to come in over the weight limit for their February '00 bout at Madison Square Garden. The larger Gatti pummeled Gamache in two rounds, ending the New England fighter's career with a vicious knockout ... Revered South African junior flyweight **Baby Jake Matlala** retired in early-March, winning his farewell fight over **Juan Herrera**. Matlala, 40, held several minor titles throughout his career, with his biggest win coming against **Michael Carbajal** in '97. The sub-five-foot boxer challenged once for a major title, losing to IBF fly titlist **Dave McAuley** in '91 ... 1996 Olympic gold medalist **Istvan "Ko-Ko" Kovacs** announced in early-March that he would retire following an April 20 farewell fight. Kovacs, 32, was one of the most successful Hungarian fighters ever, with his brief pro career highlighted by a reign with a minor featherweight belt. Kovacs lost that title in his first defense, however, and retired in part because he felt he wouldn't get another title shot in the near future ... Another veteran contender, lightweight **Rick Roberts**, announced in early-March that he too was hanging up the gloves, following a decision loss to **Masakazu Satake** in Tokyo. Roberts, 37, an American fighter who campaigned primarily in Japan under the name **Rick Yoshimura**, had one shot at a major title, coming away with a draw against **Takanori Hatakeyama** for the WBA 135-pound title in February '01 ... Las Vegas-based promoter **Tony Trudnich** was found dead in his home in late-February, apparently a victim of a self-inflicted gunshot wound. No further details were released ... **Ruth Fraser**, a California-based promoter who worked alongside her husband, **Don Fraser**, died in early-February at the age of 71 after an extended illness ... Veteran cutman **Norm Lockwood**, who worked with titleholders **Tony Lopez** and **Loreto Garza**, died in early-March at the age of 95 ... Ending on a positive note, the March 1 ESPN2 *Friday Night Fights* telecast, featuring **Eric Lucas** vs. **Vinny Paz**, was the most watched boxing program in the network's history, with an estimated 912,000 viewing homes.



Matlala: Junior fly says goodbye

THE PUNCHLINES

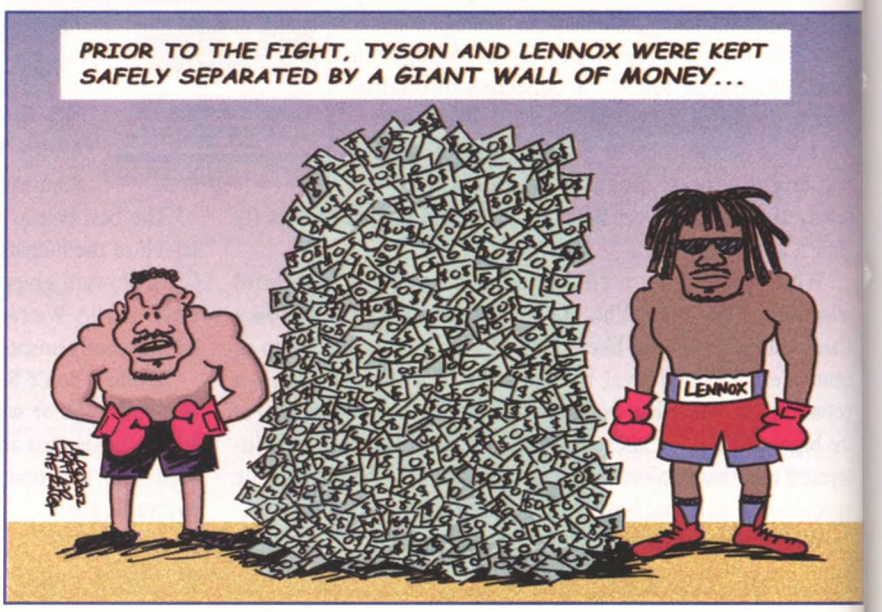
"Get out of here, man!"

—Heavyweight Corey Sanders, to FOX SportsNet's Sean O'Grady, when O'Grady tried to interview Sanders between rounds of his fight with Oleg Maskaev

"I know I can take the loser."

—Heavyweight Courage Tshabalala, showing a slight lack of confidence by calling out whoever *doesn't* win the Larry Holmes-Butterbean fight

AL KRATZER'S VIEW



"THE BIBLE OF BOXING"

RATINGS ANALYSIS

(For period ended March 24, 2002)

POUND-FOR-POUND

1. **BERNARD HOPKINS** Middleweight
2. **ROY JONES** Light Heavyweight
3. **MARCO ANTONIO BARRERA** Featherweight
4. **FLOYD MAYWEATHER** Lightweight
5. **VERNON FORREST** Welterweight
6. **FELIX TRINIDAD** Middleweight
7. **SHANE MOSLEY** Welterweight
8. **OSCAR DE LA HOYA** Junior Middleweight
9. **RICARDO LOPEZ** Junior Flyweight
10. **KOSTYA TSZYU** Junior Welterweight

HEAVYWEIGHTS: No changes.

CRUISERWEIGHTS: Alexandre Gurov (ninth last issue) and Marcelo Dominguez (eighth last issue) have switched places due to Gurov's greater activity.

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS: No changes.

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS: No changes.

MIDDLEWEIGHTS: No changes.

JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHTS: Daniel Santos (previously ranked at welterweight) debuts at number six thanks to his TKO of Yory Boy Campas (sixth last issue), who exits.

WELTERWEIGHTS: Major shakeup due to Santos' (fourth last issue) move up to junior middle, and Antonio Margarito's (formerly sixth) thrashing of Antonio Diaz. Margarito advances to third, which pushes Thomas Damgaard (third last issue) down to fourth. Diaz stays at fifth, and Golden Johnson is aboard at number 10, following his kayo of Chantel Stanciel.

JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHTS: Previously unranked Omar Weis knocks Ricky Hatton out of the 10th spot by handing Hector Camacho Jr. his first official loss as a pro.

LIGHTWEIGHTS: Floyd Mayweather (number one at 130 pounds last issue) assumes the number-two position at 135. THE RING will recognize the winner of Mayweather's April 20 bout with Jose Luis Castillo (currently number one) as the world lightweight champion. Everybody else moves down one spot to accommodate Mayweather's move up to lightweight, with a few exceptions. Paul Spadafora, by virtue of his win over Angel Manfredy, leapfrogs the less-active Stevie Johnston and remains at number three, while Johnston falls from second to fourth. The busy Juan Lazcano also holds firm at number nine, bypassing Artur Grigorian, who falls from eighth to 10th. Colin Dunne (10th last issue) departs for the time being.

JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHTS: Mayweather's move up allows those ranked below him last issue to advance one place each. Lamont Pearson (10th last issue) also exits due to his loss to unranked Orlando Salido. Two newcomers fill in the vacancies: Carlos Hernandez enters at number eight, and Jorge Barrios at number 10.

FEATHERWEIGHTS: Juan Manuel Marquez jumps from seventh to fifth, following his kayo of Robbie Peden, which pushes down Derrick Gainer (fifth last issue) and Manuel Medina (sixth last issue) one position each to sixth and seventh, respectively. Mbulelo Botile will be dropped for inactivity if he doesn't fight before the next rating period.

JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHTS: No changes.

BANTAMWEIGHTS: Mauricio Martinez (sixth last issue) departs after being stopped by Cruz Carbajal, who debuts at number 10. Everybody rated below Martinez last issue moves up one spot each.

JUNIOR BANTAMWEIGHTS: Alexander Munoz (formerly rated at flyweight) crashes the ratings at number two on the strength of his kayo of Celes Kobayashi (second last issue). Kobayashi falls to sixth. In Joo Cho (eighth last issue) is gone, due to two recent losses and subsequent inactivity.

FLYWEIGHTS: Munoz' move up to junior bantam creates a hole at number 10, which is filled by Peter Culshaw.

JUNIOR FLYWEIGHTS: Baby Jake Matlala (10th last issue) has retired. Melchor Cob Castro takes over Matlala's former position.

STRAWWEIGHTS: Wandee Singwangcha (sixth last issue) is now fighting as a flyweight. This allows everybody formerly ranked below him to move up a spot, and makes room for Khulile Makeba at number 10.

POUND-FOR-POUND: No changes. ■

THE RING RATINGS

For Period Ended March 24, 2002

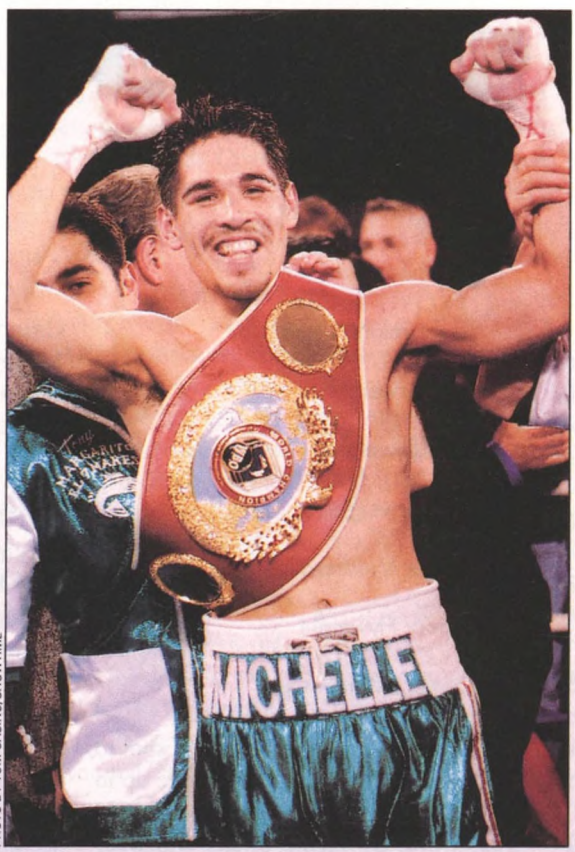


PHOTO BY TOM CASINO/SHOWTIME

Antonio Margarito climbed three spots at welterweight by topping Antonio Diaz

How Our Ratings Are Compiled

Fighters recognized as champions by THE RING are rated at the top of their division, with the top 10 contenders listed below.

Championship vacancies can be filled in one of two ways: by unifying all three alphabet titles in a division; or by winning a box-off between THE RING's number-one and number-two contenders, or, in certain instances, a box-off between our number-one and number-three contenders.

The only three occasions when a fighter will lose his championship status are when he retires, moves to another weight division, or is defeated in a championship bout.

Ratings By The Editors
Records By Fight Fax Inc.

HEAVYWEIGHTS
Weight Unlimited

Champ: LENNOX LEWIS
England 39-2-1

1. **WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO** Ukraine 38-1
2. **MIKE TYSON** Catskill, NY 49-3
3. **CHRIS BYRD** Flint, MI 34-2
4. **HASIM RAHMAN** Baltimore, MD 35-3
5. **KIRK JOHNSON** Canada 32-0-1
6. **EVANDER HOLYFIELD** Fairburn, GA 37-5-2
7. **JOHN RUIZ** Chelsea, MA 37-4-1
8. **JAMEEL McCLINE** Port Jefferson, NY 27-2-3
9. **FRES OQUENDO** Puerto Rico 22-0
10. **DAVID TUA** New Zealand 39-3

JR. MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 154 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **OSCAR DE LA HOYA** Whittier, CA 34-2
2. **FERNANDO VARGAS** Oxnard, CA 22-1
3. **WINKY WRIGHT** St. Petersburg, FL 43-3
4. **FRANCISCO CASTILLEJO** Spain 52-5
5. **BRONCO McKART** Monroe, MI 45-3
6. **DANIEL SANTOS** Puerto Rico 25-2-1
7. **KASSIM OUMA** W. Palm Beach, FL 15-1-1
8. **ALEX BUNEMA** Dallas, TX 19-3-1
9. **STEVE ROBERTS** England 29-0
10. **ROMAN KARMAZIN** Russia 28-0-1

FEATHERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 126 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **MARCO ANTONIO BARRERA** Mexico 54-3
2. **ERIK MORALES** Mexico 41-0
3. **NASEEM HAMED** England 35-1
4. **JOHNNY TAPIA** Albuquerque, NM 51-2-2
5. **JUAN MANUEL MARQUEZ** Mexico 38-2
6. **DERRICK GAINER** Pensacola, FL 38-5
7. **MANUEL MEDINA** Mexico 60-11
8. **FRANKIE TOLEDO** Paterson, NJ 40-6-1
9. **JULIO PABLO CHACON** Argentina 43-2
10. **MBULELO BOTILE** South Africa 27-2

JR. FEATHERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 122 pounds

Champ: PAULIE AYALA
Ft. Worth, TX 34-1

1. **MANNY PACQUIAO** Philippines 33-2-1
2. **BONES ADAMS** Henderson, KY 41-5-3
3. **WILLIE JORRIN** Sacramento, CA 28-0-1
4. **LEHLO LEDWABA** South Africa 33-2-1
5. **OSCAR LARIOS** Mexico 43-3-1
6. **MICHAEL BRODIE** England 32-1
7. **YODDAMRONG SITHYODTHONG** Thailand 18-0-1
8. **OSAMU SATO** Japan 25-1-2
9. **ENRIQUE SANCHEZ** Mexico 30-2-2
10. **ISRAEL VAZQUEZ** Mexico 32-2

BANTAMWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 118 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **TIM AUSTIN** Cincinnati, OH 24-0-1
2. **VEERAPOL SAHAPROM** Thailand 35-1-1
3. **RAFAEL MARQUEZ** Mexico 27-3
4. **EIDY MOYA** Venezuela 15-1
5. **JOHNNY BREDAHL** Denmark 51-2
6. **ADAN VARGAS** Mexico 37-3-1
7. **HERIBERTO RUIZ** Mexico 24-1-1
8. **GENARO GARCIA** Mexico 24-3
9. **TOSHIAKI NISHIOKA** Japan 22-3-2
10. **CRUZ CARBAJAL** Mexico 22-11-1

CRUISERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 190 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **VASSILIY JIROV**
   Kazakhstan 31-0
2. **JOHNNY NELSON**
   England 41-12-1
3. **JEAN-MARC MORMECK**
   France 27-2
4. **WAYNE BRAITHWAITE**
   Guyana 17-0
5. **EZRA SELLERS**
   Washington, D.C. 24-4
6. **O'NEIL BELL**
   Atlanta, GA 17-1
7. **VIRGIL HILL**
   Bismarck, ND 47-4
8. **ALEXANDRE GUROV**
   Ukraine 30-3-1
9. **MARCELO DOMINGUEZ**
   Argentina 32-4-1
10. **JORGE CASTRO**
    Argentina 120-8-3

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 175 pounds

Champ: ROY JONES
Pensacola, FL 46-1

1. **DARIUSZ MICHALCZEWSKI**
   Germany 45-0
2. **ERIC HARDING**
   Philadephia, PA 21-1-1
3. **ANTONIO TARVER**
   Orlando, FL 19-1
4. **REGGIE JOHNSON**
   Houston, TX 42-7-1
5. **MONTELL GRIFFIN**
   Chicago, IL 42-3
6. **DAVID TELESCO**
   Port Chester, NY 26-3
7. **JULIO GONZALEZ**
   Huntington Beach, CA 28-1
8. **BRUNO GIRARD**
   France 40-2-2
9. **LOU DEL VALLE**
   Bronx, NY 31-2-1
10. **CLINTON WOODS**
    England 41-1

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 168 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **SVEN OTTKE**
   Germany 26-0
2. **JOE CALZAGHE**
   Wales 32-0
3. **BYRON MITCHELL**
   Ozark, AL 24-1-1
4. **ANTWUN ECHOLS**
   Davenport, IA 26-4-1
5. **CHARLES BREWER**
   Philadelphia, PA 37-8
6. **THOMAS TATE**
   Houston, TX 41-6
7. **ERIC LUCAS**
   Canada 35-4-3
8. **MADS LARSEN**
   Denmark 40-1
9. **MANUEL SIACA**
   Puerto Rico 15-4
10. **MARKUS BEYER**
    Germany 24-1

MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 160 pounds

Champ: BERNARD HOPKINS
Philadelphia, PA 41-2-1

1. **FELIX TRINIDAD**
   Puerto Rico 40-1
2. **WILLIAM JOPPY**
   Washington, D.C. 33-2-1
3. **HOWARD EASTMAN**
   England 32-1
4. **ARMAND KRAJNC**
   Sweden 26-0
5. **HARRY SIMON**
   Namibia 22-0
6. **KEITH HOLMES**
   Washington, D.C. 35-3
7. **HASSINE CHERIFI**
   France 32-5-1
8. **ANTONIO PERUGINO**
   Italy 19-0
9. **TITO MENDOZA**
   Panama 26-3
10. **ROBERT ALLEN**
    Atlanta, GA 31-4

WELTERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 147 pounds

Champ: VERNON FORREST
Atlanta, GA 34-0

1. **SHANE MOSLEY**
   Pomona, CA 38-1
2. **ANDREW LEWIS**
   Guyana 21-0-1
3. **ANTONIO MARGARITO**
   Mexico 26-3
4. **THOMAS DAMGAARD**
   Denmark 28-0
5. **ANTONIO DIAZ**
   Coachella, CA 37-4
6. **MANUEL GOMEZ**
   Mexico 22-10
7. **MICHELE PICCIRILLO**
   Italy 36-1-1
8. **CORY SPINKS**
   St. Louis, MO 29-1
9. **DANNY PEREZ**
   El Cajon, CA 26-2
10. **GOLDEN JOHNSON**
    Killeen, TX 22-5-2

JR. WELTERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 140 pounds

Champ: KOSTYA TSZYU
Australia 28-1-1

1. **SHARMBA MITCHELL**
   Washington, D.C. 47-3
2. **ZAB JUDAH**
   Brooklyn, NY 27-1
3. **DeMARCUS CORLEY**
   Washington, D.C. 27-1-1
4. **BEN TACKIE**
   Ghana 24-2
5. **RANDALL BAILEY**
   Miami, FL 25-1
6. **JESSE JAMES LEIJA**
   San Antonio, TX 43-5-2
7. **MICKY WARD**
   Lowell, MA 37-11
8. **OKTAY URKAL**
   Germany 29-1
9. **ARTURO GATTI**
   Jersey City, NJ 34-5
10. **OMAR WEIS**
    Argentina 34-3-3

LIGHTWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 135 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **JOSE LUIS CASTILLO**
   Mexico 45-4-1
2. **FLOYD MAYWEATHER**
   Grand Rapids, MI 27-0
3. **PAUL SPADAFORA**
   Pittsburgh, PA 35-0
4. **STEVE JOHNSTON**
   Denver, CO 33-2-1
5. **LEONARD DORIN**
   Canada 20-0
6. **RAUL BALBI**
   France 49-5-1
7. **ANGEL MANFREDY**
   Gary, IN 39-6-1
8. **JULIO DIAZ**
   Coachella, CA 24-1
9. **JUAN LAZCANO**
   El Paso, TX 29-2-1
10. **ARTUR GRIGORIAN**
    Uzbekistan 34-0

JR. LIGHTWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 130 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **ACELINO FREITAS**
   Brazil 31-0
2. **JOEL CASAMAYOR**
   Miami, FL 26-1
3. **JESUS CHAVEZ**
   Mexico 36-2
4. **STEVE FORBES**
   Las Vegas, NV 20-1
5. **JONGKWON BAEK**
   South Korea 22-1-1
6. **LAKVA SIM**
   Mongolia 15-2-1
7. **PHILLIP NDOU**
   South Africa 26-1
8. **CARLOS HERNANDEZ**
   Bellflower, CA 36-3-1
9. **JOHN BROWN**
   Atlantic City, NJ 23-9
10. **JORGE BARRIOS**
    Argentina 33-1

JR. BANTAMWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 115 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **MASAMORI TOKUYAMA**
   North Korea 26-2-1
2. **ALEXANDER MUNOZ**
   Venezuela 22-0
3. **FELIX MACHADO**
   Venezuela 21-3-1
4. **GERRY PENALOSA**
   Philippines 44-4-2
5. **SAMSON TOYOTA-THAILAND**
   Thailand 41-0
6. **CELES KOBAYASHI**
   Japan 24-5-3
7. **JESUS ROJAS**
   Venezuela 34-9-3
8. **PEDRO ALCAZAR**
   Panama 22-1-1
9. **MAURICIO PASTRANA**
   Colombia 27-3
10. **MARTIN CASTILLO**
    Mexico 21-0

FLYWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 112 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **ERIC MOREL**
   Madison, WI 31-0
2. **PONGSAKLEK WONJONGKAM**
   Thailand 42-2
3. **IRENE PACHECO**
   Colombia 26-0
4. **HAWK MAKEPULA**
   South Africa 20-1
5. **ALEJANDRO MONTIEL**
   Mexico 47-3
6. **FERNANDO MONTIEL**
   Mexico 23-0-1
7. **MEDGOEN TOYOTA-THAILAND**
   Thailand 24-1
8. **SAEN SOR PLOENCHIT**
   Thailand 40-1
9. **MALCOLM TUNACAO**
   Philippines 11-1-2
10. **PETER CULSHAW**
    England 20-1-1

JR. FLYWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 108 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **RICARDO LOPEZ**
   Mexico 50-0-1
2. **ROSENDO ALVAREZ**
   Nicaragua 31-2-1
3. **YOSAM CHOI**
   South Korea 24-1
4. **BEBIS MENDOZA**
   Colombia 26-1
5. **PICHIT SIRIWAT**
   Thailand 24-2
6. **NELSON DIEPPA**
   Puerto Rico 21-2-1
7. **JORGE ARCE**
   Mexico 27-3-1
8. **HIDENOBU HONDA**
   Japan 23-1
9. **ZOLANI PETELO**
   South Africa 17-3-2
10. **MELCHOR COB CASTRO**
    Mexico 66-8-4

STRAWWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 105 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **JOSE AGUIRRE**
   Mexico 26-1-1
2. **ROBERTO LEYVA**
   Mexico 20-0-1
3. **CHANA PORPAOIN**
   Thailand 46-2-2
4. **KEITARO HOSHINO**
   Japan 23-7
5. **NOEL ARAMBULET**
   Venezuela 14-2-1
6. **JOMA GAMBOA**
   Philippines 31-7-1
7. **KERMIN GUARDIA**
   Colombia 33-2
8. **DANIEL REYES**
   Colombia 25-1
9. **MIGUEL BARRERA**
   Colombia 21-0-2
10. **KHULILE MAKEBA**
    South Africa 16-1

RYAN OUT LOUD

By Jeff Ryan

POW! RIGHT IN THE KISSER!

While watching bits and pieces of an all-day marathon of *The Honeymooners* recently, I came to my attention that the classic sitcom made more than its fair share of reference to the Sweet Science. In one episode, Ed Norton claimed that his mother-in-law wa tough enough to have once been rated by THE RING. (A check of our files revealed that it's true.) I another; Ralph Kramden boasted that he had ringside tickets to the fights and would be sitting am the likes of Rocky Marciano, Jake LaMotta, Rocky Graziano, Roland LaStarza, and Joe Giardello. "Boy," replied a clearly impressed Norton, "what a spot for a pizzeria."

And then there was the time the two friends were heading to the arena and Norton decided t bring along his binoculars. "Why do you need binoculars?" Ralph wondered. "We're sitting in th first row." Said Norton, "I know, but sometimes there are better fights in the balcony." Anyon who has ever been in Philly's Blue Horizon, L.A.'s Grand Olympic Auditorium, or London's Yor Hall could certainly relate to that.

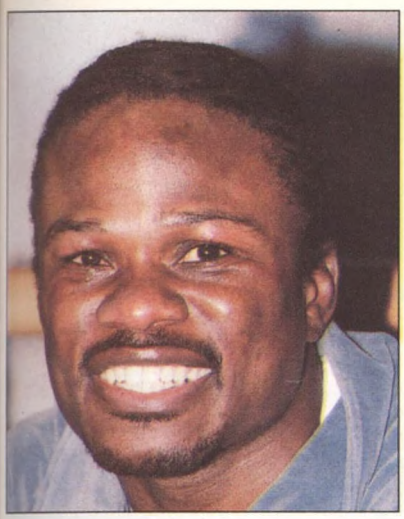
In fact, the more you think about it, the more you realize that *The Honeymooners* and the fig game actually have quite a bit in common.

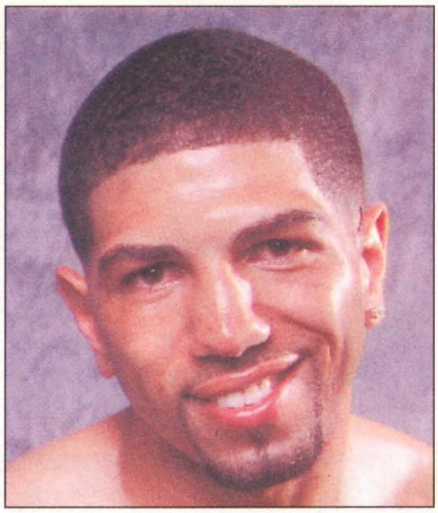
For example: Virgil Hill, who hails from Bismarck, North Dakota, is rumored to have often vi ited the Raccoon National Cemetery, the final resting place of Ralph's and Norton's lodge brot ers. It was once reported that Muhammad Ali, fed up with Ken Norton's clowning against th ropes during the 11th round of their Yankee Stadium bout, barked at his nemesis after the roun "Oh, you're a riot, Norton! A regular riot!" And, you probably weren't aware that Hong Kon Gardens isn't just the Kramden favorite Chinese restaurant in Benson hurst. It's also the name of a 12,500-se arena that will host a WBC strawweig title elimination bout this autumn. Eer stuff.

***Boxing could learn a lot from* The Honeymooners**

If you're still not convinced th there's a connection between Ralp Kramden and Ralph Citro, or between string of poloponies" and Victor Pol consider that, in many ways, the lesson of *The Honeymooners* are the lessons boxing. Such as ...

•You can work in a sewer and st be a nice guy: Ed Norton, engineer subterranean sanitation, shows us tha So do Paulie Ayala, Chris Byrd, th Klitschko brothers, Shane Mosley Vernon Forrest, Winky Wright, Jess James Leija, Antonio Diaz, Georg Foreman, Emanuel Steward, Gil Clanc





Forrest, Ayala, and Wright: Three nice guys who work in a sewer

Larry Merchant, Steve Albert, and a bunch of other guys who haven't let the stench of pro boxing cling to them like cigar smoke on a flannel shirt.

•**It pays to be prepared when you get summoned to the hot-seat:** When Mike Tyson was addressing the Nevada State Athletic Commission in an attempt to defend his antics during that press conference brawl with Lennox Lewis, didn't he sound a lot like Ralph Kramden trying to explain himself to the IRS agent? "Uh, hommana, hommana, hommana." The difference was, Ralph made a lot more sense.

•**Don't try to be something you're not:** Alice was forever lecturing the big man about this, but Ralph wouldn't listen. He'd try to pass himself off as the head of a bus company one day and as a pool hall tough guy the next. And all it got him was trouble.

Maybe someone should have lectured Joel Casamayor and Acelino Freitas before they squared off in January. Casamayor forgot that he was a crafty boxer during much of the bout, brawled and fought dirty, and cost himself dearly when he was penalized a point for hitting on the break. Slugger Freitas, meanwhile, assumed the role of cautious stylist in the last six rounds and nearly blew the victory. The second-guessing hasn't stopped yet.

And speaking of second-guessing, that's what Lewis will be subjecting himself to now that he has convinced himself that he's something he's really not: the next Denzel Washington. The heavyweight king says he wants to expand his acting career and even take on some superhero roles. In the words of Ralph Kramden, har-har-hardy-har-har.

•**Don't take the Grand High Exalted Mystic Ruler too seriously:** The head of the Raccoon Lodge no longer seemed so grand or so high after we learned that he worked alongside Norton in the sewer. And through the years, we've learned to chuckle at the authority of boxing's big shots. Those, of course, would be the WBA, which recently killed the trace of credibility it had left by creating the "super champion," the WBC, whose president tried to censor a fighter's speech by threatening to take away his rating, and the IBF, which has been involved in more shady dealings than Tony Soprano.

•**Mamba lessons only spell trouble:** Carlos, who taught the mamba to all the ladies in the Kramdens' apartment building, apparently had a second job: training Wright, Byrd, Keith Holmes, Derrick Gainer, and Hector Camacho Jr. Geez, if we want to see five guys dance around as much as they do, we'll get tickets for an 'N Sync concert.

•**Sleepwalking is dangerous:** It sent Norton wandering into other people's apartments in the middle of the night. Wonder if that's Tony Ayala Jr.'s excuse.

•**Get right to the point:** Enough with political correctness, protocol, and good manners. Sometimes, you just have to tell it like it is. After listening to Tyson address the Nevada State Athletic Commission, executive director Marc Ratner should have shaken his head in disgust, pointed at the ex-champ and, in his best Brooklyn bus driver voice, said, "*You* are a mental case."

•**Nobody likes a blabbbbbbbermouth:** ESPN2's Max Kellerman is boxing's answer to Alice's chatterbox mother. He might not give away the ending to a Broadway play, as she did, but he can give some people indigestion. Dr. Flip Homansky could suture Kellerman's lips together and he'd still find a way to keep yapping.

•**Late starting times have their drawbacks:** Ralph and Norton had trouble getting up for work after watching *The Late, Late, Late Show*, and that didn't end nearly as late as HBO's *Boxing After Dark* or the average Don King broadcast on pay-per-view.

•**Avoid the "crazy, hare-brained schemes":** In the case of inventor and entrepreneur R. Kramden, those were no-cal pizza, wallpaper that glowed in the dark, a uranium field in Asbury Park, and a useless kitchen utensil that was supposed to revolutionize cooking. In boxing, it's distaff dukeouts, HBO trying to blend hip-hop and haymakers in a short-lived (thankfully) production called *KO Nation*, a fighter legally changing his first name to GOOFi, guys having temporary advertisements painted on their backs, a promoter suggesting that the Tyson-Lewis fight take place in Nigeria, and Showtime handing Tim Smith a live microphone. (And we thought Witherspoon was boxing's only "Terrible" Tim.)

Okay, now. You know that I know that you know that I know that you know that I know that I'm running out of space here. So in the true spirit of Ralph and Alice, let me close with the line that ended so many episodes of *The Honeymooners*. It's dedicated to Mia St. John, whose inability to hook off the jab or counter off that ropes means nothing just as long as she's got that face and body: Baby, you're the greatest. ■

CAMERA CLICKS

PHOTO BY MIKE GREENHILL

Buster Douglas is looking more like "Busterbean" these days, as exercise obviously hasn't been his top priority since wrapping up his ring career. But that just means there's more of the former heavyweight champion to love, and he got a rousing reception when he made an appearance at a fight card in Columbus, Ohio, in February.

What was it Joe Louis said about the original "Pittsburgh Kid." Billy Conn? Paul Spadafora shows that you can run, but you can hide from our cameras, which catch him closing the show against Angel Manfredy in less than emphatic fashion. In Spaddy's defense, maybe he's just practicing his tight turns in hopes of competing in short-track speed skating at the 2006 Olympics.

PHOTO BY TOM CASINO/SHOWTIME

Tourism is down in Las Vegas these days, and logic seems to be headed in the same direction. The Nevada Athletic Commission recently put a ban on face-to-face confrontations between fighters at weigh-ins and press conferences. That was a good idea. However, is keeping the fighters separated by placing a showgirl in between them going to solve anything? Fortunately, junior middleweights Daniel Santos and Yory Boy Campas were well-behaved enough that this young lady didn't have to worry about getting caught in any crossfire.

Yes, please.

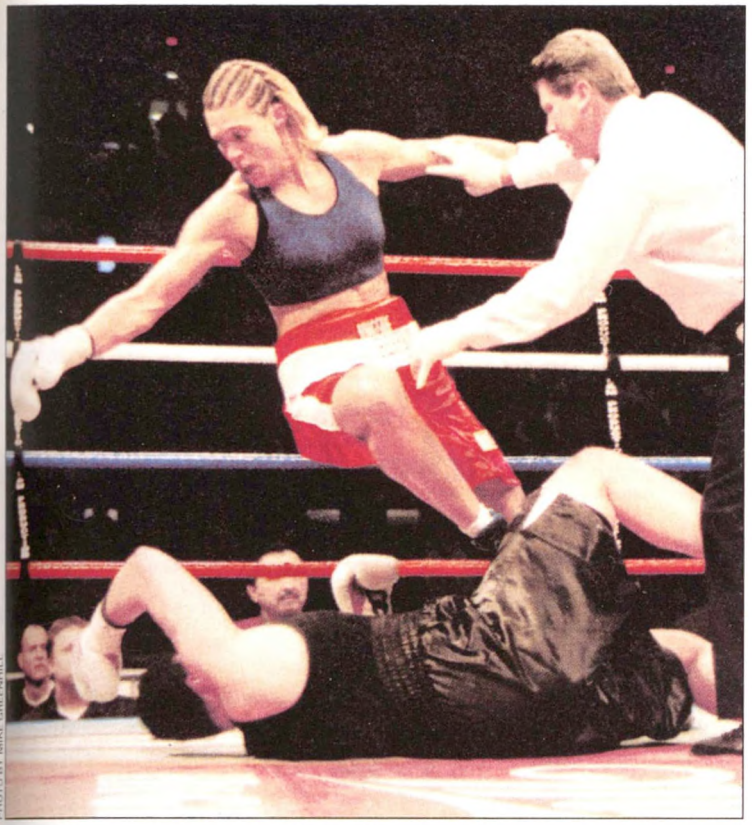


PHOTO BY MIKE GREENHILL

Timber! 6'6" female heavyweight Vonda Ward is about to join her opponent, Gigi Jackson, on the canvas as their fight turns into boxing's equivalent of a car wreck. Leonard and Benitez they ain't, but Ward won this not-so-artful matchup by fourth-round kayo.

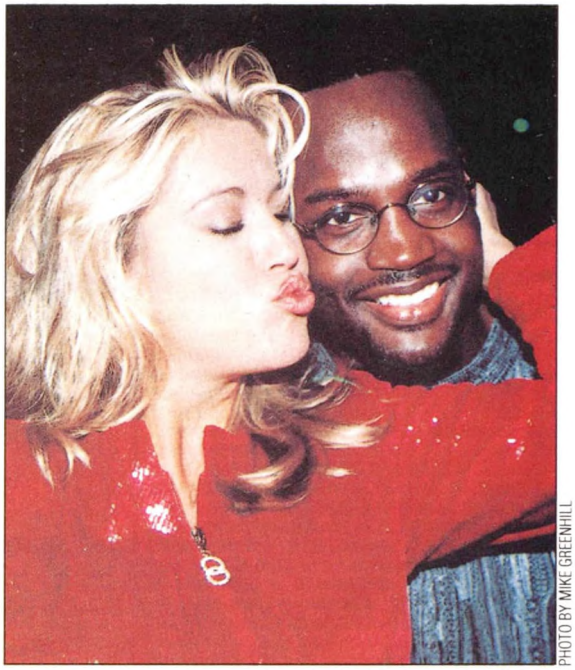


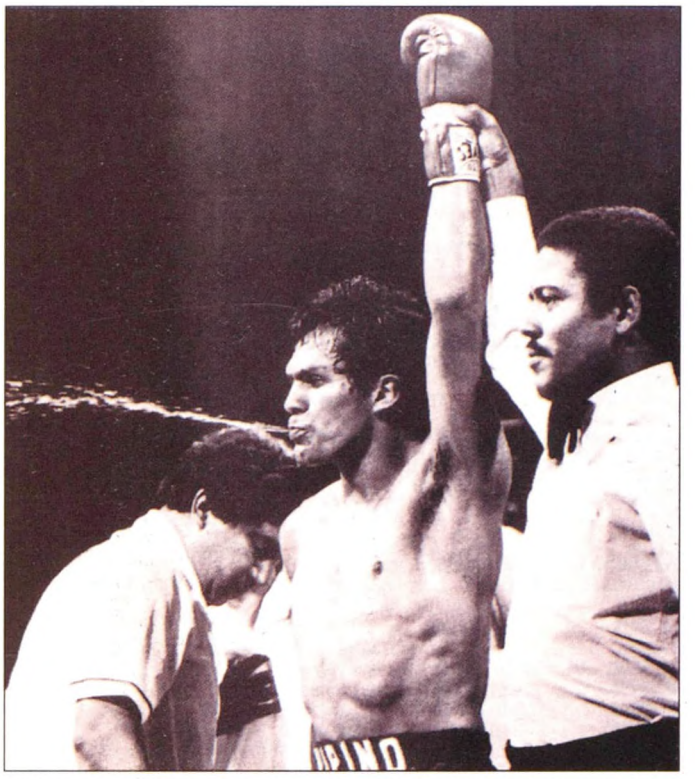
PHOTO BY MIKE GREENHILL

This is what we call victory in defeat. Super middleweight Dana Rucker, fresh off a tough, 10-round loss to Anthony Hanshaw, gets a consolation hug and kiss from ring announcer Amy Hayes. Of course, it was a consolation prize that we all had the opportunity to share in, to a degree, when Amy appeared in Playboy *a few months ago.*

NOSTALGIA CORNER

PHOTO BY MIKE GREENHILL

Lightweight prospect Gary Balletto isn't just a boxer, he's also something of a gymnast. And if he ever fights in this position, he's going to make it awfully hard for his opponent not to hit him below the belt.



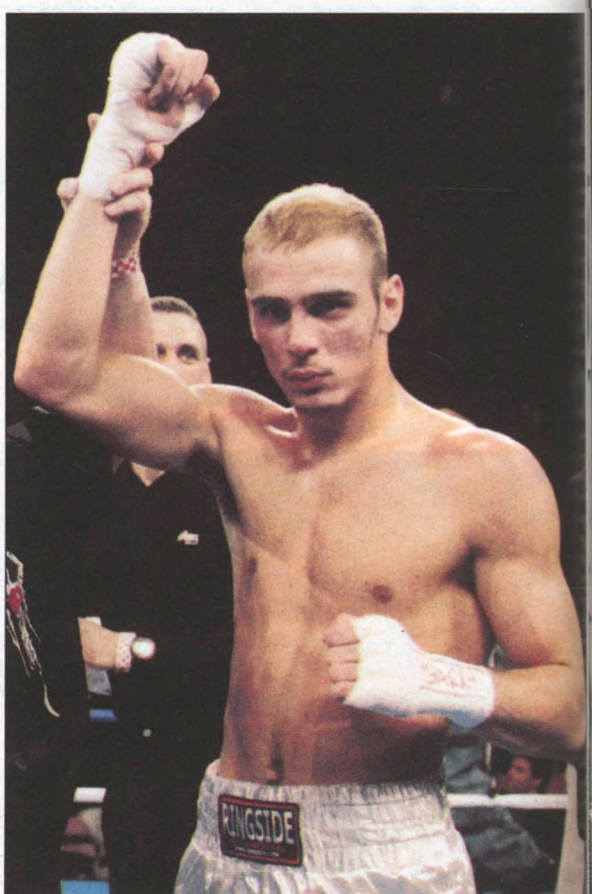
And you thought Tony Ayala Jr. was boxing's best spitter in the early-'80s. Then-welterweight titlist Pipino Cuevas turned into a human water fountain after turning away the challenge of Harold Volbrecht on April 6, 1980, in Houston, Texas. It was Cuevas, however, who would be all wet after his next fight, when he lost the WBA title to Tommy Hearns in two rounds.

NEW FACES

KELLY PAVLIK

Middleweight

By Joe Santoliquito



Kelly Pavlik was an easy target. Sitting there on the locker room bench, a gangly white kid who was all elbows and kneecaps, a human praying mantis in boxing gear, Pavlik would pretend not to hear the passing taunts and laughs: "I got an easy one; I got the white boy."

Pavlik would never look up. He'd continue tying his shoes, strapping on his equipment, adjusting his trunks and head gear, keeping a calm veneer. The stringy fighter from Youngstown, Ohio, who looked more like a distance swimmer than a boxer, never made eye contact, even when it came time for the staredown at center ring of those amateur tournaments. Just the words would resonate inside his head: "I got an easy one; I got the white boy."

That was all Pavlik needed to hear.

Within seconds, Pavlik would have the respect of his opponent. Within minutes, he'd have a victory. A couple of big right hands would easily change the mistaken perception people had. Even as a pro, Pavlik has heard an occasional snicker by an opponent, but it's nowhere near the degree of ridicule he absorbed as an amateur, where he earned the nickname "The Ghost" for obvious reasons.

The skinny-ass white boy has turned into a pale version of a young Tommy Hearns. He still doesn't like to look an opponent in the eye, yet there is no ignoring the air of confidence Pavlik carries into the ring. He doesn't say too much, because he feels he doesn't have to, but he genuinely knows how good he is, and knows how dangerous he can be.

The 6'3" Pavlik is 12-0 (12) as a middleweight. He has attracted the eye of Cameron Dunkin, who co-manages Pavlik along with Kelly's father, Mike. The talented 19-year-old has a promotional contract with Top Rank. It's safe to say no one is laughing at Pavlik now.

(Continued on page 62)

PRO RECORD

2000		
June 16	Eric Tzand, Indio, CA	KO 3
Aug. 5	Nelson Hernandez, Madison, WI	KO 1
Sept. 15	Frankie Sanchez, Denver, CO	KO 1
Oct. 15	Joseph Collier, Nashville, TN	KO 1
Nov. 17	Lafayette Randolph, Reno, NV	KO 2
Dec. 15	Cedric Johnson, Madison	KO 2
2001		
Feb. 4	Matthias Bedburdick, Concho, OK	KO 3
March 23	Thomas Walker, Owensboro, KY	KO 1
June 8	Grady Brewer, Baraboo, WI	KO 2
Aug. 4	Mario Lopez, Las Vegas	KO 2
Nov. 21	Rob Bleakley, Youngstown, OH	KO 2
2002		
Feb. 23	Robert Dasoyan, Las Vegas	KO 2

FIGHTS	WON	LOST	DRAW	KOs
12	12	0	0	12

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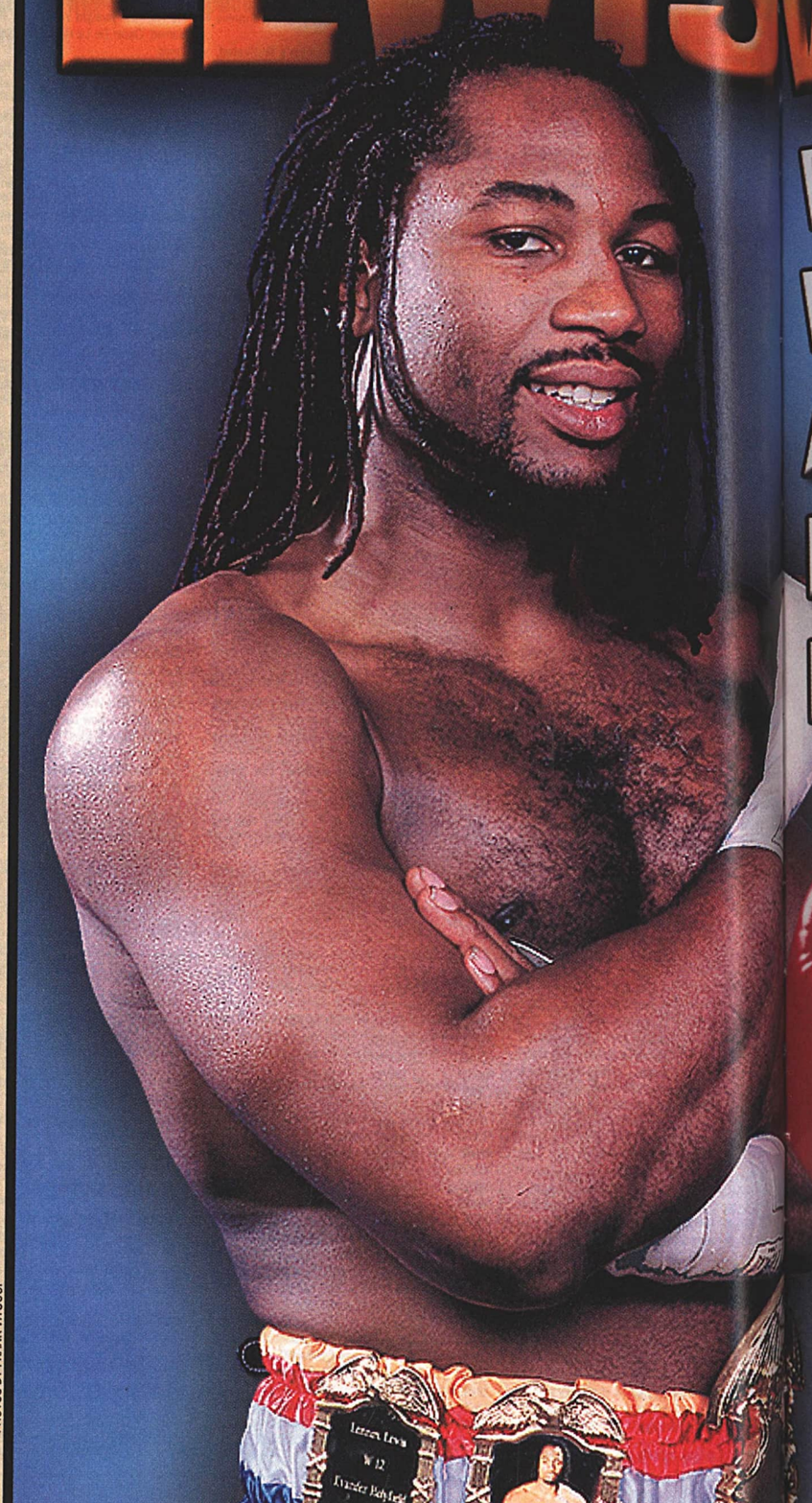
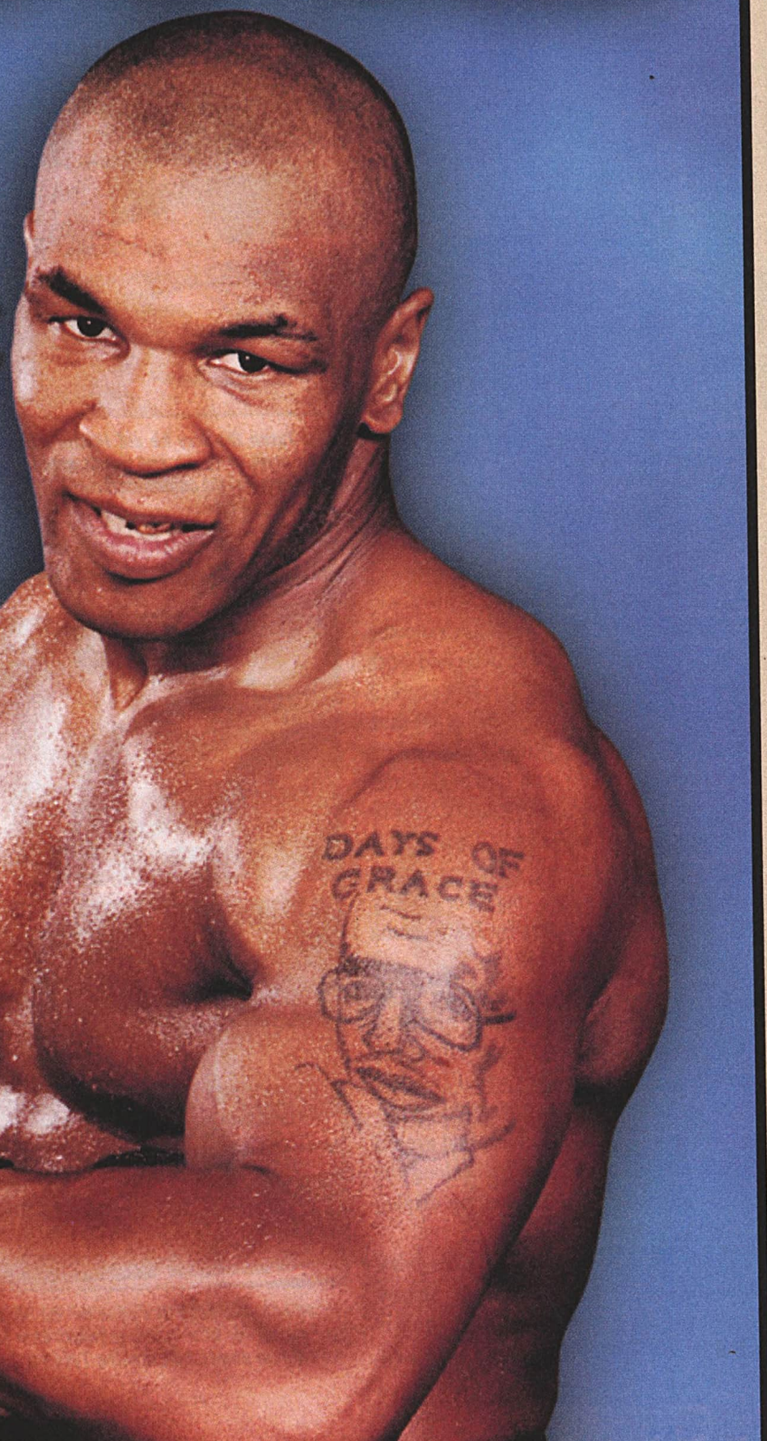
By Eric Raskin

LEWIS vs. TYSON

Who Will Win ... And What Happens Next!





PHOTOS BY FRANK VITUCCI

Due to the fact that fighters wear gloves and their palms are therefore unavailable for reading, we in the fight-writing fraternity commonly turn to our crystal balls when it comes time to make predictions about what the future holds. And certainly, everyone has a prediction on the biggest fight to come along in five years, Lennox Lewis vs. Mike Tyson.

Of course, with this fight, it may be a little dicey using our crystal balls, since Tyson could be inclined to try to hurl them across a Cuban hotel lobby at us. But we'll take our chances.

Here's what we know: Lewis is the heavyweight champion of the world, he sports a record of 39-2-1 (30), he's had a Hall of Fame career, and he's clearly the number-two draw in this fight. That's because Tyson, 49-3 (43) with 2 no-contests, whose reign as undisputed champ ended more than 12 years ago, has been boxing's biggest and most compelling star since he burst onto the scene in the mid-'80s. The Brits want to see Lewis fight, and so do the hardcore fans because, after all, it is the heavyweight championship of the world that's on the line every time he steps into the ring. But the mainstream could pretty much care less about likeable Lennox. Not so with Tyson. Love him or hate him, everyone wants to see him fight, even if it's for an entirely different, guilty-pleasure-laced reason than it used to be.

It's not so much the idea of Lewis vs. Tyson that makes this fight a potential two-million-buy pay-per-view blockbuster. It's the idea of the heavyweight champ, who just happens to be Lewis, vs. Madhouse Mike. But once the bell sounds, it comes down to Lewis vs. Tyson, and that's what we're here to prognosticate about. All the hype, all the licensing issues, all the moving from state to state and date to date—none of it matters. It's about Lewis' style, Tyson's style, and how the fight is going to shake down.

What we're presenting on the following pages are five different possible outcomes, and what those various results would mean for the fighters and for boxing. All are realistic scenarios, at least according to our crystal ball. Which is the most likely? That's hard to say. But that's part of why this fight has the world—and we don't just mean the boxing world—talking.

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA

It wouldn't be at all surprising to see Lewis blow out Tyson the way he did Hasim Rahman last November. Such a result would completely destroy the myth of Tyson and would enable Lewis to finally escape the shadow of some of his more famous heavyweight contemporaries.

LEWIS BY MID-ROUNDS KNOCKOUT

More experts are picking this outcome than any other. If you've watched both Lewis and Tyson over the last few years, it makes sense to reach the conclusion that, regardless of what a prime Tyson might have been able to do with Lewis, this version of Iron Mike is simply vastly inferior to the reigning champ. Lewis' long jab, his booming right hand, his educated uppercuts—it could all be too much for the guy who was getting shut out by Frans Botha for four rounds a few years ago.

Lewis will jab Tyson silly early on, the theory goes, then start cracking him with the right hand, and then it's just a matter of time. Somewhere between round five and round eight, Lewis gets the washed-up former teen sensation out of there, and even if there's a hairy moment or two along the way, it's essentially a dominating display by the Englishman.

If this is the scenario that unfolds, what it means for boxing and for the heavyweight division is that the status quo is maintained. Lewis, though more famous than ever before, will simply have beaten a faded former phenom whom he was supposed to beat, so his place in history won't be affected much.

Yes, the ignorant masses will finally realize that Tyson and Evander Holyfield aren't the world's best heavyweights, so in that way a one-sided win will be good for Lewis. But the fighter who will really be affected is Tyson. A decisive kayo loss could remove the final veil from the Tyson mystique. Lennox could be the Marciano to his Louis, the Holmes to his Ali, forcing the world to accept that Tyson is done as a championship-level fighter. It will be sad in some ways if this fight represents the end of the Tyson era, but it could help boxing by allowing other, younger heavyweights—guys like Wladimir Klitschko, Jameel McCline, Kirk Johnson, and Chris Byrd—to be pushed to the forefront and get the recognition they deserve.

TYSON BY EARLY-ROUNDS KNOCKOUT

Those who really believe Tyson has the perfect style to blow out Lewis are in the minority, but even those who are picking Lewis to win easily would have to agree that Iron Mike at least has the old "punch-er's chance." Tyson has always had exceptional power, and even if his ability to set up his shots or to put his punches together

Tyson is still a heck of a puncher, as his blastout of Frans Botha in January '99 illustrated. Lewis, not known for having the greatest chin in heavyweight history, could conceivably fall from one well-timed powershot, making Tyson a three-time heavyweight titlist.

has waned, the sheer force behind his blows has not. Need evidence? Try the right hand that leveled Botha. Or maybe the left hook that short-circuited Lou Savarese. Or the right hand that turned Andrew Golota into a petrified mess. Okay, *more* of a petrified mess.

Lewis has a decent chin; he's not the type of guy to get spaghetti-legged from a grazing shot. But if a serious puncher hits him square, it's all over. Oliver McCall and Hasim Rahman proved that, and Tyson should be able to do the same thing if he lands one perfectly placed bomb. So in this scenario, let's assume that sometime in the first three rounds, Lewis stands at the wrong distance for a split-second or gets a little lazy with a jab, and Tyson unloads with a shot that the champ never sees. The cushion provided by Lewis' bun of dreadlocks won't be enough to save him when his head crashes against the mat, and a 10-count later, Tyson is the undisputed champ again, 16 years after he first won the title.

The effect this could have on boxing is nothing short of mind-blowing. Just as the NBA honchos silently root for Shaq, Kobe, and the Lakers to win the championship, a lot of boxing's suits—and we don't just mean Shelly Finkel and Jay Larkin—would be thrilled to have Tyson on top again. It's the ultimate story line, for someone as perversely popular as Tyson to come back from being totally written off to conquer the world again. As Tyson is a mainstream phenomenon, it makes boxing a mainstream phenomenon like it was in the Ali days, and any future title defenses are going to generate revenues in the $100-million range.

There are negatives, however. For one, who do you think are going to get the first cracks at Tyson? That's right, Lewis and Holyfield, meaning the young guys who represent the future of the division will be put on hold again. And what if Tyson does something to land in jail again during his reign as champ? That's not good for the sport, having a vacant heavyweight title.

And for Lewis and his legacy, obviously a quickie kayo loss to a guy he was supposed to manhandle would be disastrous. All that talk of Lennox being a top-10 all-time heavyweight would be silenced, replaced by late-night talk show monologue jokes comparing him to Enron stock or Milli Vanilli.

LEWIS BY DECISION

We've seen it happen before with Lewis, when fighting a shorter guy who struggles to get inside his massive reach:

(Continued on page 28)

When the 6'5" Lewis wants to pump his jab and exercise caution, he's pretty tough to beat, as Evander Holyfield found out in their two encounters. But if he takes that approach against Tyson, his stock might actually go down, even in victory.

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Lewis-Tyson

(Continued from page 27)

lots of jabs, occasional right hands, clinching whenever the opponent gets close, and avoiding getting hit at all costs. It's not the most thrilling version of Lennox Lewis, but it's the one best suited to beat certain opponents, and Tyson might be such an opponent.

In his first fight with Holyfield, Lewis might have been able to take "The Real Deal" out if he'd turned more aggressive, but he played it safe, let it go the distance, and settled for a scandalous draw. Against David Tua, the strategy was similar, the fight was even more one-sided, and the decision was unanimous. And if Lewis fights the same way against Tyson, it's very conceivable that he emerges with a lopsided decision victory, perhaps even a shutout if Tyson's as rusty as some of us suspect.

Frankly, there could be no worse scenario for the sport of boxing. Imagine: Millions of people who barely ever watch a fight are bored to tears by 36 minutes of artless jab-and-grab "action," with the TV commentary drowned out by the booing of thousands of disappointed spectators. You think these people are going to order a pay-per-view fight again anytime soon? Lewis' stock won't go up with the mainstream or the hardcore fans if he captures a decision over a guy who has already been knocked out twice. And though a decision loss wouldn't necessarily signal the end of Tyson, it would at least put the end within sight.

The bottom line is, Lewis winning with caution and smarts does nobody any good. But for Lewis, it's better than taking unnecessary risks and getting whacked out, so it remains a realistic possibility.

TYSON BY LATE-ROUNDS KNOCKOUT

A lot of people think that if Tyson doesn't get to Lewis early, he can't win. And those people have a point. Only once in his career has Tyson scored a stoppage after the seventh round, and that was way back in 1986 against Jose Ribalta. At the same time, Lewis has never been stopped later than the fifth. So if you go on history alone, Tyson needs to knock the champ out early.

But history doesn't always dictate the future. Sumbu Kalambay had never been kayoed in 50 fights prior to getting dusted by a single punch in the first round from modest-hitting Michael Nunn. Fernando Vargas had never been knocked down before the infamously slow-starting Felix Trinidad floored him with a left hook 2 seconds into their fight. Oscar De La Ho was sent to the canvas by Narci Valenzuela and Giorgio Campanella, b not by Trinidad or Shane Mosley. N everything in boxing follows form.

If Tyson can keep it together mentall he can come from behind and get to Lew late. Lewis has a tendency to tire in th later rounds, and Tyson, even in his loss t Buster Douglas and his first fight wit Holyfield, was a game loser, trying t apply pressure and find the knocko punch even as the beating he took accum lated. Whereas Tua stopped trying to wi and hardly threw any punches in the la stages of his fight with Lewis, Tyson, wh has a busier style, will keep firing, provid ed he isn't broken mentally. It's probabl not the most likely scenario, but it is possi ble that Lewis builds an early lead, get careless, and gets caught.

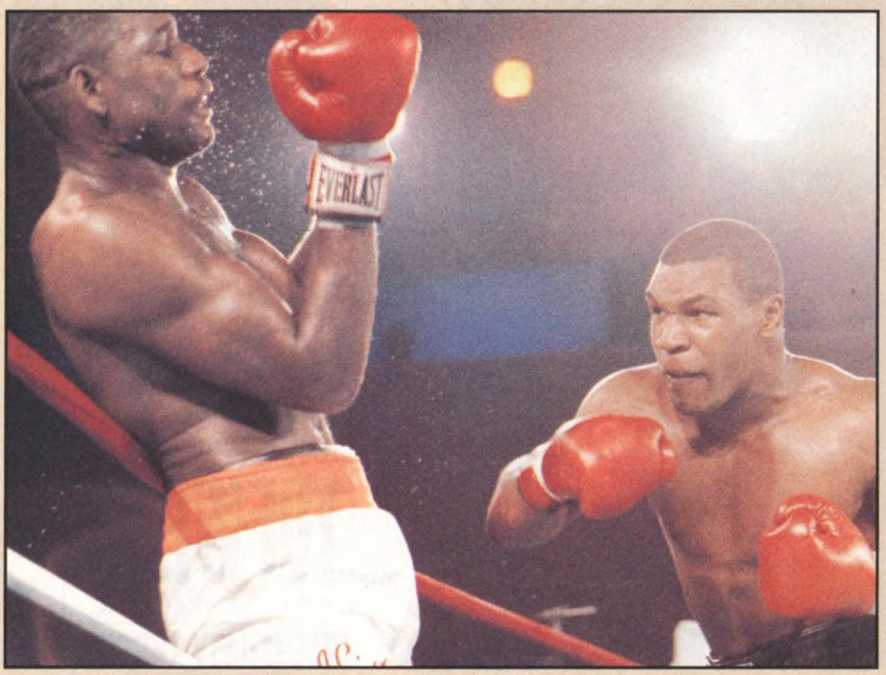
If this is how the fight turns out, th impact will be perhaps even greater than i Tyson wins early. Fans will have bee treated to a dramatic fight, and just as th manner in which George Foreman starche Michael Moorer enhanced his legend, s too would a miracle, come-from-behin kayo benefit Tyson. And naturally, if that' how it turns out, selling a rematch with Lewis would be easier than hawking a cheeseburger on *Survivor* island.

LEWIS BY DISQUALIFICATION

A lot of folks who shelled out 50 buck for Holyfield-Tyson II were awfully miffed about the way that fight ended. An rightfully so. They had paid good money to get some revealing insights on Holyfiel and Tyson, and instead they got Tyson revealing his incisors to Holyfield. It wa shocking because, as bizarre and self-destructive as Tyson is, we never coul have imagined at the time that he wa capable of something quite like that.

But now we know better. Anyone who orders Lewis-Tyson without believing the fight could end with Tyson getting himself disqualified is just plain ignorant. Tyson bites, he tries to break arms, he puncher after the bell, and he does it all because he no longer knows the proper way to respond to adversity. If things aren't going his way Tyson will look for a way out.

But let's give Tyson a little credit and assume that he'll at least do something



Tyson hasn't scored a kayo past the seventh round since his 10-round knockout of Jose Ribalta almost 16 years ago. Nevertheless, a late-round stoppage against Lewis, who sometimes tires as his fights wear on, is a possibility that could prove phenomenal for boxing.

One thing Tyson and the fight game can do without is another ugly, riot-inducing disqualification. If Tyson does something heinous yet again, a lifetime suspension from boxing could follow.

original this time. The biting thing is getting old, and he already allegedly sunk his teeth into Lewis at their disastrous New York press conference. Maybe he'll turn to low blows, which makes sense since Lewis is six inches taller and thus will have his groin positioned in punching range. But then again, that could cost Lewis the opportunity to ever have children and, in turn, cost Tyson the opportunity to ever eat them. Perhaps a bodyslam makes sense, since we know Tyson's a big pro wrestling fan. Or maybe he'll go a step farther and grab a steel folding chair, or throw salt in Lewis' eyes, or spray green mist from his throat. Whatever the method may be, it's highly conceivable that after two or three rounds of getting beaten up by Lewis, Tyson will do something to warrant a DQ.

In a way, this would be better for Tyson than getting beaten outright. The morbid curiosity would remain; in fact, it would probably grow stronger. But the downside is that Tyson would almost certainly face another suspension, maybe even a lifetime ban. That would not be the best thing for his earning power.

And, although fans should be fully prepared for such behavior this time around, they would still be understandably upset if the fight was to end in this manner. We'd hear more commentary about black eyes for boxing and what a joke the sport has become, and it would be hard for us to argue otherwise. Other sports have had their Dennis Rodmans and their John McEnroes to soil their images, but nobody compares to Tyson when it comes to smearing a crap-colored stain across the game that made him famous. For all the good stories in boxing, from Bernard Hopkins to Vernon Forrest to Paulie Ayala, one dastardly deed from Tyson can overshadow all of it.

But there are two silver linings that make this a preferred scenario to a boring decision win by Lewis. First, a bizarre DQ ending will be entertaining on a sick and twisted level, which is preferable, at least in the short run, to a fight that's not entertaining at all. And second, it could represent the last we ever see of Tyson in a boxing ring, which would allow the heavyweight division to finally move forward. Of course, it would be fantastic if Tyson could beat Lewis. But if he can't, then the sport of boxing really doesn't need him anymore. ■

RAFAEL & JUAN MANUEL MARQUEZ

Which Brother Will Win A Title First?

By David Mayo

It never hurts to have shtick on your side. The Marquez brothers of Mexico City have that going for them. They also have talent, noteworthy victories, increasing fame, and curiously raised eyebrows from HBO bigwigs who make their livings perpetuating storylines ranging from Tony Soprano at the Bada-Bing Club to a couple of boxing brothers vying for world championships in the same year.

Not that shtick alone is enough. But it helps.

Juan Manuel Marquez certainly can appreciate that concept. He still suffers in perception from declining a fight two years ago with Naseem Hamed, whose career foundation seems to have been built on shtick, yet who still commands high attention even as the boxing public questions his fighting heart—something no one questions about Marquez.

Rafael Marquez witnessed that fallout from his brother's decision and did not decline the big fight. He stepped in with former pound-for-pound entrant Mark Johnson not once, but twice. When his controversial victory in their first fight didn't please everyone, the younger Marquez brother climbed in with Johnson again and completed the chore with a convincing knockout.

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA

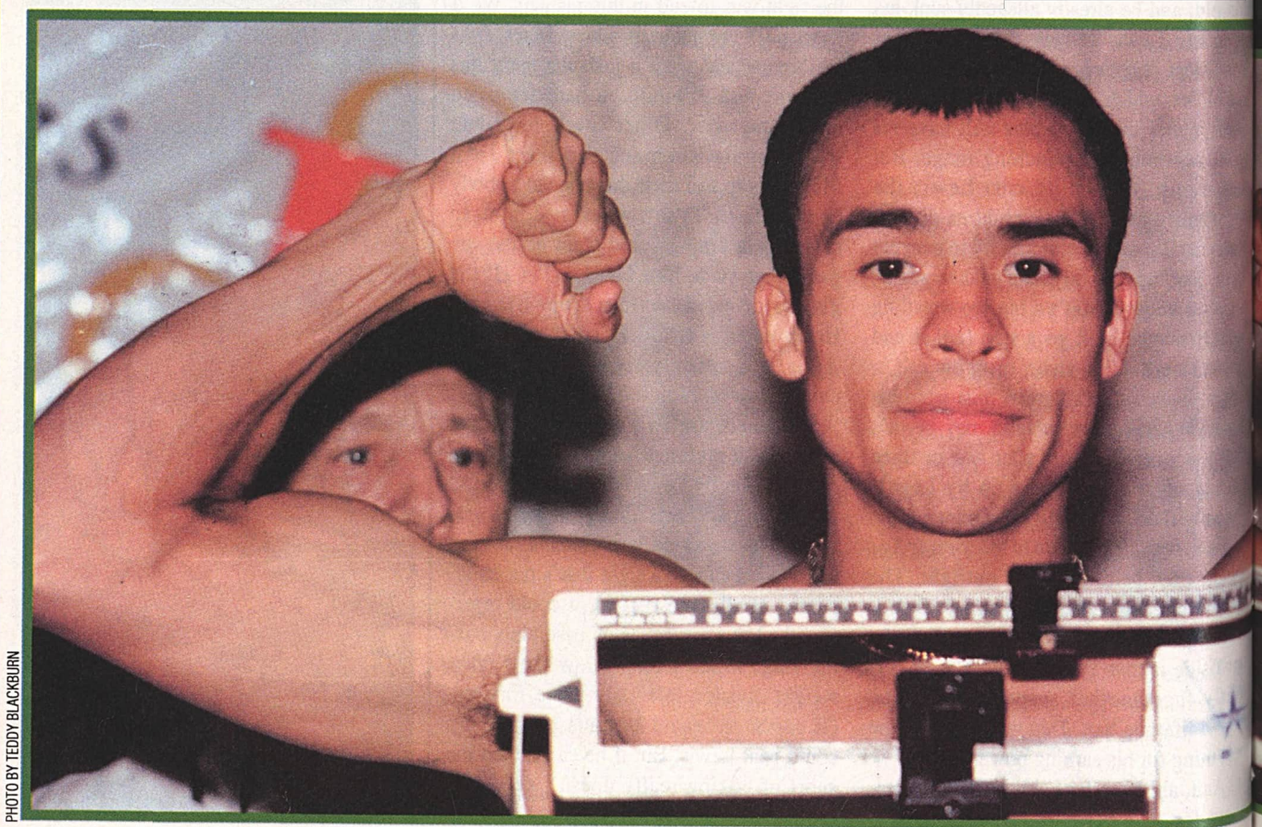


PHOTO BY TEDDY BLACKBURN

The Marquez brothers, featherweight Juan Manuel (left) and bantamweight Rafael (above), both flexed their muscles in a pair of HBO-televised wins two weeks apart. The victories made both Marquezes mandatory challengers to the IBF titles in their respective divisions.

Until then, it was generally assumed that Juan Manuel Marquez, a 29-year-old featherweight, would be the first brother to find himself in a title fight this year. His victory over Robbie Peden in March was an IBF title eliminator, and as mandatory challenger, Juan may still beat his younger sibling to a title belt.

But Rafael, a 27-year-old bantamweight, sped up his personal timetable with the two upsets over Johnson less than five months apart, and now is an IBF mandatory title challenger himself.

The two brothers suddenly find themselves on the cusp of fame and fortune together. That is the nature of their shtick, which was unintentionally sculpted, yet based firmly in sound pugilistic principle.

"They're both very well-schooled," said Emanuel Steward, Hamed's erstwhile trainer. "They aren't at all what you would think of as the stereotype of the Mexican fighter, shooting left hooks to the body and fighting toe-to-toe all the time. They both have good jabs and pretty good defense. And they are both adaptable. Without adaptability, Rafael wouldn't have been able to beat a crafty fighter like Mark Johnson twice. It's awfully difficult to beat someone of Mark Johnson's caliber if you only know one way to fight, although Rafael's punching power really turned that second fight around."

Juan Manuel spent more than two years trying to escape the shadow of his unsuccessful previous title try, a dreadful 1999 clutchfest with then-WBA titleholder Freddie Norwood. But the victory over Peden was the older brother's ninth in a row since then, including seven consecutive knockouts, and propelled him into the position of mandatory challenger to IBF boss Manuel Medina.

He may not get that shot at Medina, however, since the Mexican veteran has

PHOTOS BY STEVE MATTEO/HBO

NABF featherweight titlehold
Daryl Pinckney. Decisi
points victories in '97 ov
Alfred Kotey and the rugg
Dominican Agapito Sanch
pushed Marquez up the rating

His title shot against No
wood two years later prov
more of a setback than a defe
ordinarily might. Each fight
scored a knockdown. But a ge
eral lack of action, large
because Norwood is lefthand
and extraordinarily awkwar
stained their match. The fig
was a visual nightmare. Ma
quez lost a decision, his on
loss since a pro-debut disqual
fication on a 38-2 (30) record.

"Looking back, I definite
think I won that fight," Ma
quez said. "Freddie Norwoo
didn't even try to fight. I don
know how they gave him th
decision. That's all in the pa
now."

The Norwood fight wa
Marquez' first HBO appearance, on th
undercard of the Floyd Mayweather-Carl
Gerena fight at Mandalay Bay in La
Vegas. How long ago was that? Well

PHOTO BY TEDDY BLACKBURN

decided to make an optional defense against Johnny Tapia first. That's okay, though, because what Marquez really wants is the first crack at the winner of Erik Morales-Marco Antonio Barrera II, the fight for THE RING championship belt and supremacy in the talent-laden 126-pound class, which also includes Hamed, Tapia, and Derrick Gainer near the top.

"It is a very good division, one of the best in boxing. The winner of that fight will make the best fight for me," Juan Marquez said of the Barrera-Morales rematch. "It will make a good match, whoever wins."

The brothers followed similar paths, which is part of what makes them a riveting package deal for the media. Their father, Rafael Marquez Sr., who ultimately made his younger son his namesake, also was a professional fighter. He trained both sons to national amateur success in Mexico, then turned over their pro management and training to a personal friend, the highly regarded Nacho Beristain.

Both brothers moved quickly through the ranks. Within three years of his 1993 pro debut, Juan Manuel was beating the likes of former WBA junior featherweight titlist Julio Gervacio and former

On March 9 in Pittsburgh, Juan Manuel used his left hand (top) to keep Robbie Peden at the proper distanc then couldn't miss the Australian with the right hand (above) as the fight wore on. Peden took a vicio beating in the 10th round and had to retire on his stool.

Juan Manuel blasts Peden with a right uppercut en route to scoring his seventh consecutive knockout win. Some experts consider Marquez the best fighter in the world without a major title, especially those on the West Coast who have been touting him as a future star for years.

Mayweather had yet to engage in any public skirmishes with his father, promoter, or television network. Hamed ruled the featherweight roost. Barrera was still a 122-pounder. Oscar De La Hoya was undefeated. And no one had heard of the Internet gambling site whose temporary tattoo Marquez wore on his back when he fought Peden.

Marquez declined an offer to fight Hamed 11 months after the Norwood loss. Marquez had been the top-ranked contender to then-WBO titlist Hamed for two years without ever fighting him. Hamed once received an extension on his mandatory deadline to avoid Marquez. When a reported offer of $400,000 was made to Marquez to fight Hamed on relatively short notice in August 2000, Marquez declined, claiming a hand injury, although he later acknowledged he simply wasn't ready. Beristain also said the financial offer was far too low, and nothing more than a ploy for Hamed to claim he tried to bargain with Marquez, but the would-be challenger refused to negotiate.

"Hamed did everything he could to avoid the fight," Beristain said. "His people want you to be at a disadvantage when you fight him. It will be fine with me if Juan never fights him. There are many good featherweights to choose from."

Marquez' quest of two-plus years to shake the taint of his loss to Norwood culminated with his victory over Peden, March 9 on the Paul Spadafora-Angel Manfredy card at the A.J. Palumbo Center on the campus of Duquesne University in Pittsburgh. Marquez kept the fight at a distance early, controlling the two-time Australian Olympian with jabs and combinations, and when Peden was forced to push closer, Marquez broke him down

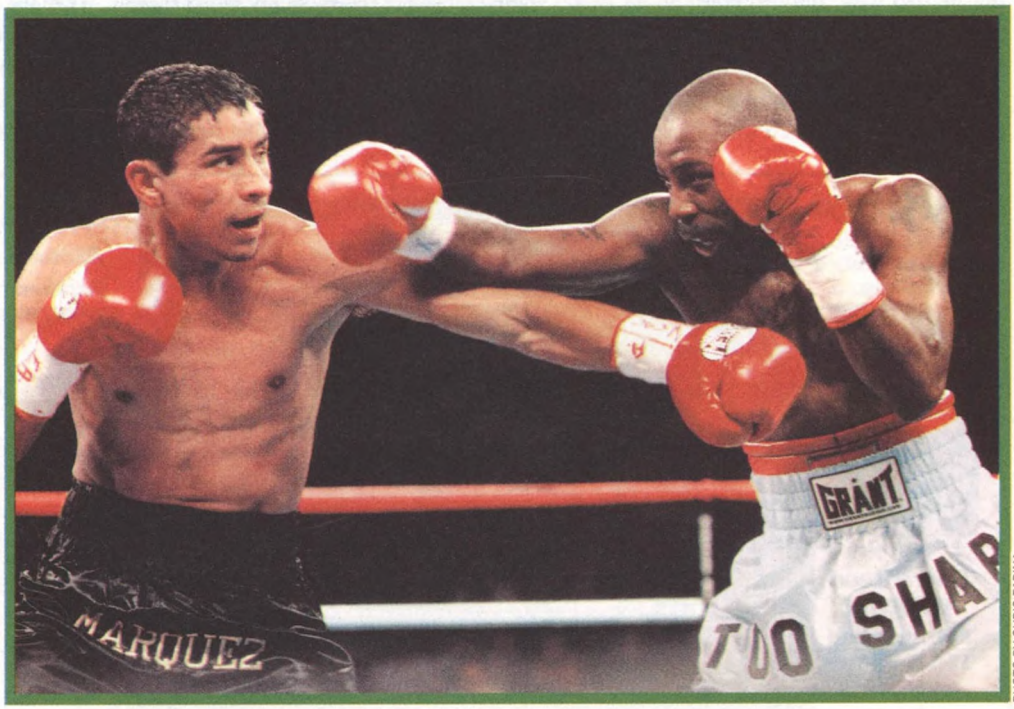


PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA

Younger brother Rafael turned in an outstanding performance in his February 23 rematch with Mark "Too Sharp" Johnson in Las Vegas. Slick southpaw Johnson had never been decisively beaten before, but Marquez outboxed and outpunched him to prove his win in their first fight, four months earlier, was no fluke.

with a series of right hands Peden proved incapable of avoiding.

Peden pressed the action as the 10th round came to an end. But he vomited into his spit bucket moments after returning to his corner, the result of swallowing too much blood and too many right hands.

Trainer Roger Bloodworth immediately told Peden, "You can't fight like that," and stopped the contest, resulting in the second loss of Peden's career, and giving Marquez both the NABF and previously vacant USBA titles.

It was the second HBO victory in two weeks for the Marquez brothers, a unique achievement in the network's long boxing history. Rafael Marquez reaffirmed his dominance of Johnson with a February 23 knockout victory on the Paulie Ayala-Bones Adams II undercard at Mandalay Bay.

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA

Johnson, who had never been on the floor previously, hit the canvas once in the seventh and twice in the eig against Marquez. The emphatic win made Rafael the number-one contender to IBF bantam boss Tim Austin.

Their first fight, in October 2001 in Corpus Christi, Texas, prompted a fiasco in which Johnson was declared the winner on a narrow decision, and left the arena believing he had won, only to learn about two hours after the fight that a computing error had resulted in a reversal of the decision.

The strange outcome prompted Marquez-Johnson II, just 20 weeks later. There was no controversy in the rematch. Marquez, 27-3 (25), turned around a close fight in the middle rounds. He dropped Johnson with a right late in the seventh round, and the bell was probably the only thing that saved the suddenly faded former titleholder. Johnson almost made it through the following round, too, but wilted under Marquez' assault. The second knockdown of the eighth round prompted referee Tony Weeks' stoppage with seconds remaining.

Johnson's two losses to Marquez end a 40-fight unbeaten streak over more th 11 years, including 11 title fights in tw weight divisions.

"They're real fighters; they want fight the best opponents, and HBO lik them," Bob Arum said of the Marque brothers, both of whom he promote

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In his lone previous title try, the elder Marquez lost a controversial decision to Fred Norwood after an ugly, clinch-filled fight. Juan Manuel may get a chance for redemption later this year, ideally against the winner of June's Erik Morales-Marco Antonio Barrera showdown.

"People always bring up that Juan didn't take the Hamed fight, but Hamed's people made a ridiculous offer. Now Juan is in a title fight and Hamed is still trying to prove to people what Juan has proven already, that he's a real fighter. And Rafael is a devastating puncher. They're both terrific fighters."

While Juan Manuel Marquez would prefer to fight the Morales-Barrera II winner, Arum's desire to make Barrera-Hamed II later this year might render that unworkable unless Morales repeats his controversial 2000 win over Barrera. Arum said if Barrera beats Morales, he is authorized to make Barrera-Hamed II. But if Morales wins, Morales will fight Hamed only if Hamed fights a Barrera rematch first, Arum said.

In the latter scenario, Morales would be freed to defend the world title at least once while Barrera and Hamed fought their rematch. Maybe Marquez will get that shot. But if not, he's still in position to go after Medina or Tapia in the interim.

"I would like to fight the Morales-Barrera winner, but Manuel Medina is going to be a very tough opponent, and he's a four-time world champion," Marquez said. "I understand the business of boxing might make me wait a little longer for the fight I want, but I'm confident, and if I keep winning I know I will get that opportunity."

Rafael Marquez' opportunity may be the one that comes first, though, as he is now ranked number one behind IBF bantamweight titleholder Tim Austin. And more important than the alphabet ranking, the younger brother's pair of upsets over Johnson have given him widespread recognition as a major player at 118 pounds.

The brothers have the same core team members—same trainer and manager, same promoter, and both still have their father in their corner. And despite the quick ascension of Rafael after Juan Manuel's years of toiling to get back into the title picture, there is no apparent sibling tension. They have fought 10 times on the same card, most recently in April 2001.

"Two brothers fighting on a championship level makes a compelling story in itself," said Kery Davis, HBO Sports' vice president of programming. "It might not be realistic to say that they could challenge for titles on the same program. But I can envision having both Marquez brothers in title fights on the same HBO boxing show someday, which could make for a very interesting event."

Might make for good fights, too. Either way, it never hurts to have shtick on your side. ■

David Mayo covers boxing for the Grand Rapids (Michigan) Press and is a regular contributor to this magazine.

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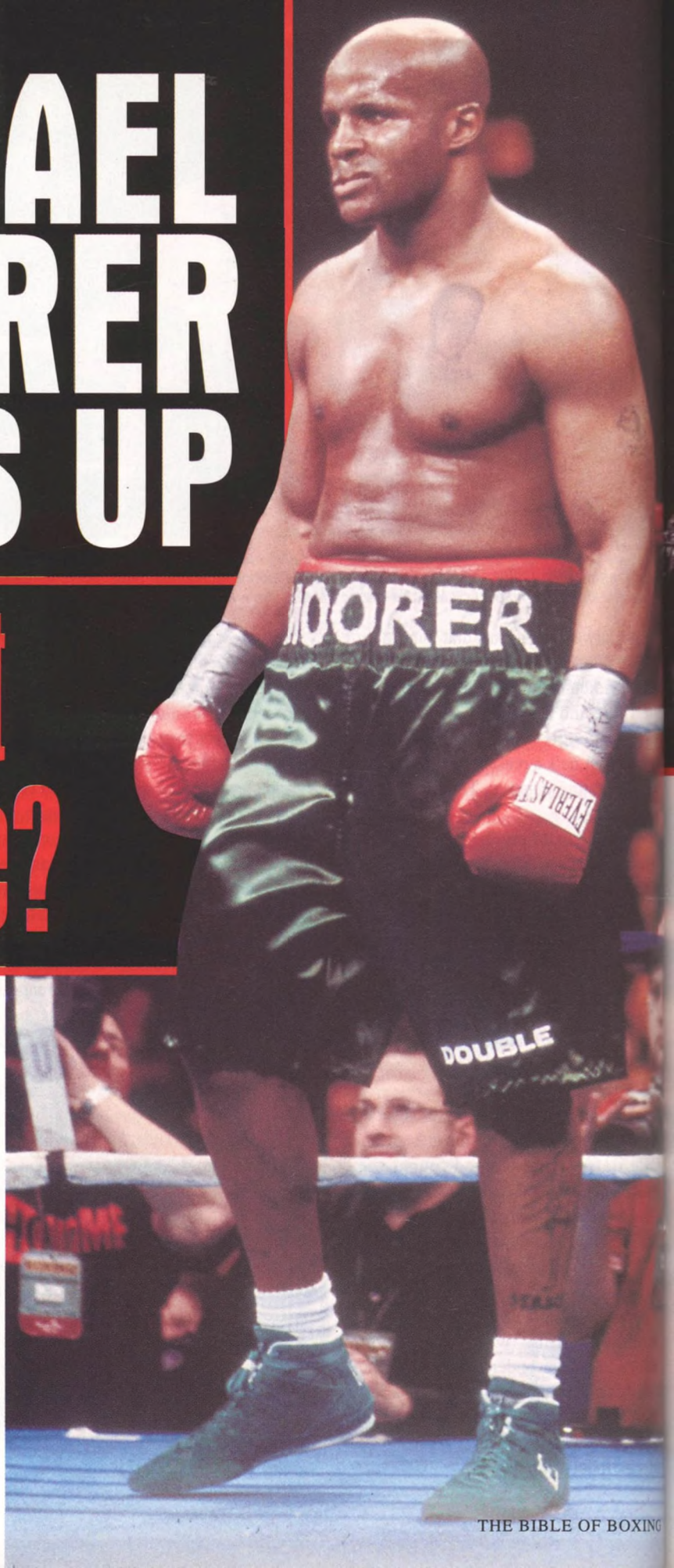
MICHAEL MOORER WISES UP

But Is It Too Late?

By Ted Bodenrader

When Freddie Roach began training professional pugilists for a living, he assumed it would always be about teaching, conditioning, and motivating. Then came the day when a client named Michael Moorer pushed his way into his office to acquire the services of the Boston-bred trainer. It was then that the profession became about as simple as solving this impossible enigma before him.



Moorer awaits the start of his bout with Robert Davis on Showtime. Even though the two-time former heavyweight titlist has shed almost 70 pounds since he began his latest comeback, there's still some excess baggage around his middle.

PHOTO BY TOM CASINO/SHOWTIME

PHOTO BY TOM CASINO/SHOWTIME

Davis was supposed to be a relatively easy fight for Moorer, but boxing's first southpaw heavyweight king faded after an explosive start and even took some flush punches when Davis rallied a bit to win some of the later rounds.

From the moment this Motown menace stepped into his presence four years ago, Roach never quite knew what role he'd be taking on from one day to the next. Some days he felt like a psychiatrist, others a dietician, and most days, he just felt plain ol' crazy.

Roach admits there were turbulent times during his tenure with the two-time former heavyweight titlist from Detroit when he even felt like an oral surgeon.

"Sometimes, it was like pulling teeth with this guy," recalled the trainer. "Pulling teeth to get him to do anything I asked of him. It was probably the most difficult task I've ever had in this business."

But those days are in the past. Four-and-a-half years later, Roach finds himself in yet another unforgiving role.

Sometimes, he feels like he's filling the shoes of a priest. In order to reacquaint the 34-year-old Moorer with the heavyweight crown for the third time, most would say that Roach better know how to pray.

"We don't know exactly what is going to come out of this," Roach admitted. "We're gunning for a title, but there's work to be done here, no question. Anybody who thinks this is going to be easy has it wrong."

Especially if they took in the fourth fight of this foggy comeback trek, an uninspiring points win over journeyman Robert Davis in February.

If Mohegan Sun Casino was hoping to unveil its new arena with a bang, the headliner of this Connecticut card woefully missed. Instead, the night ended with a dull yawn, as fans departed the premises before Jimmy Lennon Jr. even announced Moorer the obvious unanimous decision winner over the outmatched competitor. (The official scorecards had it 99-89, 97-91, and 97-91, while THE RING scored it 97-92).

Like the casino executives who hosted the Moorer-Davis match, Roach was hoping for a sharper, crisper product. As it turned out, he only unraveled the same recycled goods. As for the performance, Moorer, 43-2-1 (34), generously gave himself a "C," and we're assuming the grade stands for "counterproductive." The 10-round dance was hardly the stuff champions are made of.

"That's what you call getting into fighting shape," said Moorer, after fighting past round five for the first time in nearly five years. "I got the 'W' and that's all that matters to me right now. I just set out to beat the guy in front of me and that's what I did."

This sentiment, however, proposed a pair of questions to those who endured the grueling snoozefest. Was this the typical just-enough-to-win approach that lulled Moorer's career for nearly a decade? Or does Moorer simply no longer possess the artillery to dispose of second-rate customers like Davis?

Considering Moorer's minimal round output in his comeback quest, coupled

with a dreadful fizzle down the stretch, the smart money would point toward the latter of the two.

"Believe me, I was trying to get him out of there," admitted Moorer. "Give the guy credit; he was game. Knocking him out wasn't an easy thing to do."

Yet, easy was exactly what Moorer's managerial team had in mind with the china-chinned Davis. When Davis, 26-3 (15), walked out to the ring like a prisoner on death row, it seemed to many that his undoing would be near. Out next marched an unusually chipper Moorer, seeming eager to dish out a little capital punishment.

Over the first three minutes, that's precisely what he did. A right-left-right assault knocked Davis on his seat, and the numbing right hand on the button that drove him back to the canvas moments later nearly turned out the lights for good.

Davis survived the rest of the round on life support, but during the minute interval, the show's patrons were already flinging on their winter coats, anticipating a prompt finish.

But when the bell rang and it came time to deliver the execution, Moorer somehow let the weakening Davis off scot-free.

"It was nice to get a few rounds in," declared Roach, "but it told us that we need to work on some things, namely conditioning and punching in combination. We wanted to get a knockout with Davis."

Rounds two though 10 would reveal the disturbing news. By the third round, the fire in Moorer's eyes was replaced by rubber in his legs. After the fourth he was virtually on autopilot, and the gas was running low.

While it may seem premature to lower Moorer's prestige to the level of a Butterbean, against Davis, the former titlist was little more than a four-round fighter. Furthermore, Moorer exposed a physical declining for the first time in his career, one that was not unlike that of the retired Buster Douglas and Riddick Bowe. Like these former champion heavies, Moorer also returned to action after expanding to the vicinity of 300 pounds.

As a result, Moorer at times resembled nothing short of chopped liver. It was Davis, and not Moorer, who finished the stronger fighter, even managing to stagger Moorer on not one, but two occasions.

Shortly afterward, the stress began flaring within Roach's eyes as he entered the locker room and tossed a towel Moorer's way.

As the fighter caught it in the air and draped it over his welted head, he violently coughed up his insides, hucking them straight into a bucket at his feet.

Engraved into his left pectoral remained one of the chief motivations for such a grueling conquest. As Moorer peered down at the tattoo of his nine-year-old son, Michael, it helped remind him of what he was doing in a Connecticut casino in the dead of winter, heaving like a man 20 years his senior.

"I gave it a lot of thought before I came back," Moorer conceded. "Before, I was fighting because that was what everybody expected me to do. But the passion wasn't there. Now I've got it."

Whether there is any substance behind these words, only Moorer truly knows. Yet, to shed nearly

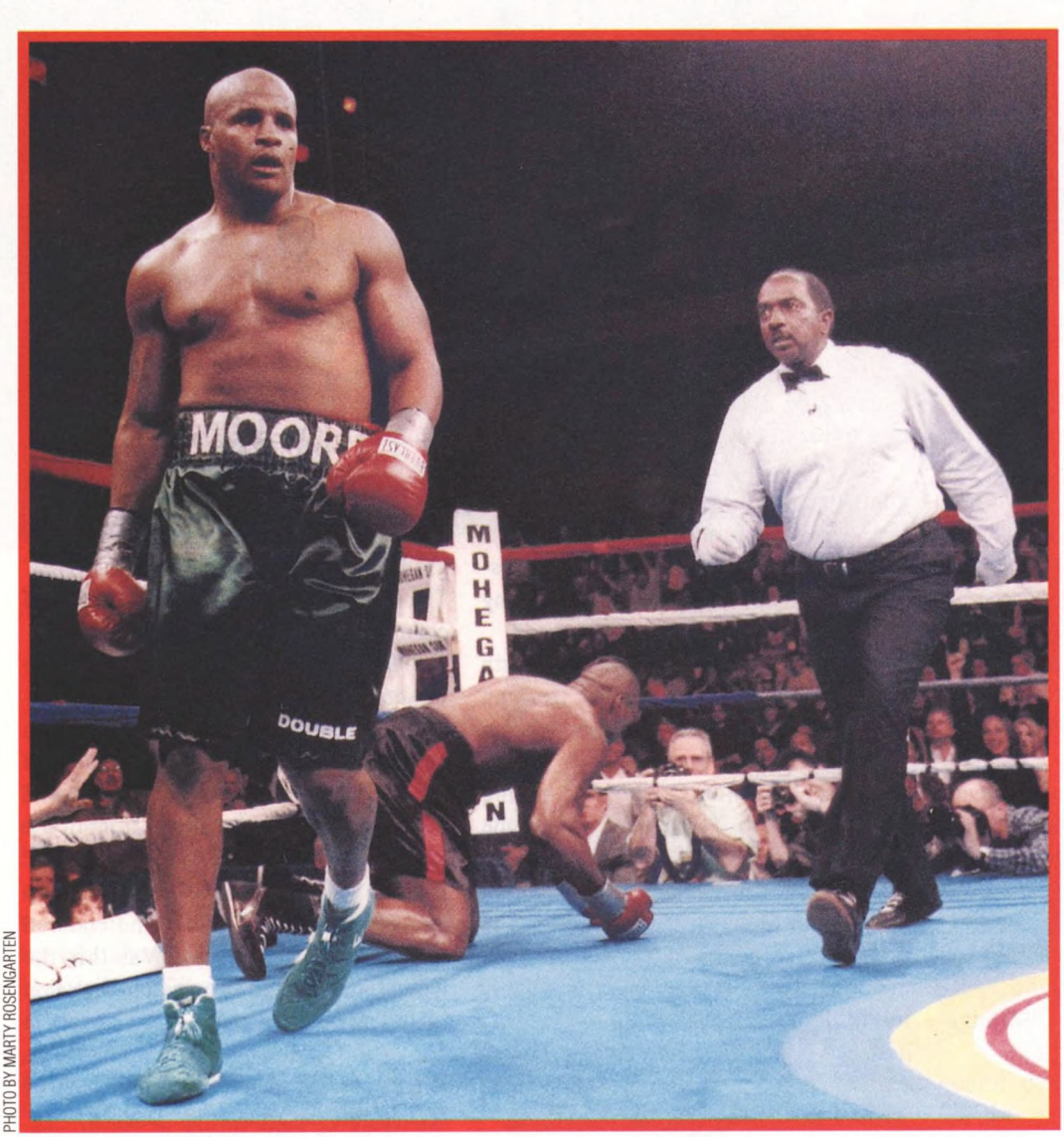


PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

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It looked like Moorer would have a quick night when Davis was knocked down twice in the opening round. But when his opponent survived the onslaught, Moorer began to coast and had to settle for a unanimous decision victory.

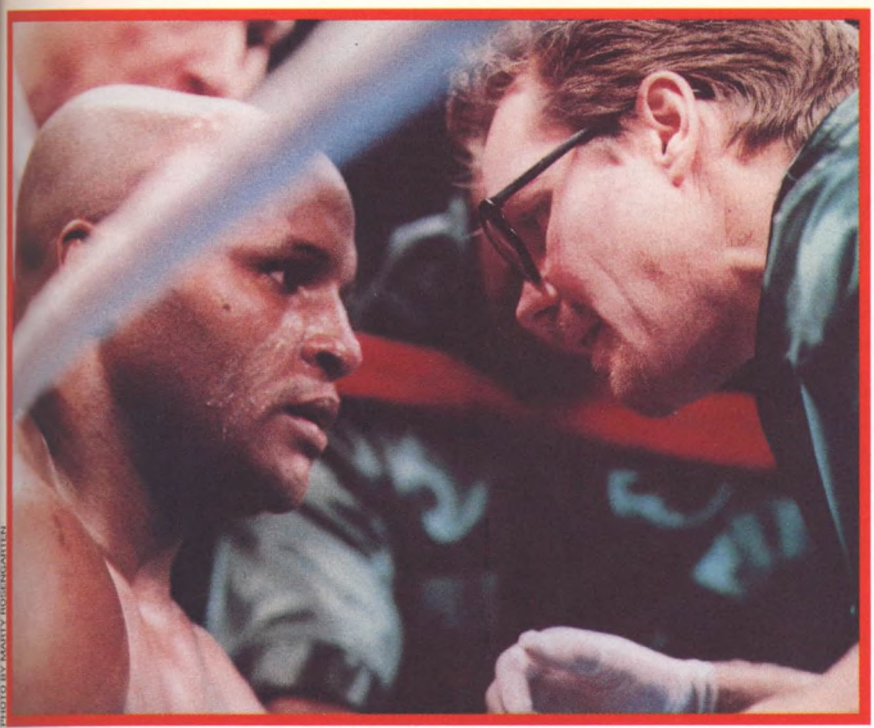


PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

Freddie Roach instructs Moorer between rounds during the Davis fight. The trainer has taken on the chore of trying to help the troubled fighter regain the heavyweight title, which figures to be a demanding assignment. "There's work to be done here, no question," said Roach.

70 pounds and return to the mix, it undoubtedly required a drive that was woefully absent in prior careers.

Those years, in which Moorer was labeled a quitter and a dog, were perhaps the most frustrating of Teddy Atlas' training career. Before the days that Roach jumped aboard, Atlas spent endless afternoons trying to solve the Moorer enigma. Before that, Emanuel Steward had his hands full with Moorer at his famed Kronk Gym.

In their keen eyes, Moorer was a lot like the Dallas Cowboys of the early-1990s. He was young, vastly talented, and highly dysfunctional.

The raw talent turned out to be the prevailing factor, ultimately snagging two heavyweight titles, including a 1994 triumph over a prime Evander Holyfield. Nonetheless, a sharp downward spiral began to accelerate shortly after Atlas dismissed Moorer in 1997, tired of watching his pupil fulfill merely half of his potential due to nagging mental shortcomings.

A swirl of personal and domestic despair would follow, as would a crushing defeat to Holyfield in their rematch, an engagement that first linked Moorer with Freddie Roach.

But Roach's days with Moorer always seemed numbered. A series of incidents surrounding the troubled fighter would make headlines over the ensuing years, and the only rounds Moorer would get in were in a barroom. Hence, alcohol became the guiding force in his life.

While the drinks were going down, the scale was soaring upward. Fat, lonely, and depressed, Moorer would periodically settle in on the living room sofa and reflect on what was once a promising ring career. Although his name was often preceded by "two-time heavyweight champion," Moorer felt more like a two-time loser.

To both Moorer and the boxing public, two highlight clips always seemed to encapsulate his ring career: the infamous one-punch destruction at the right hand of George Foreman in 1994, and the spectacular five-knockdown affair with Holyfield three years later.

Realizing this, Moorer one day peeked down at the waistline of his 300-pound torso, which at one time sported an array of light heavyweight and heavyweight title belts. The next day, he emptied out the liquor cabinet. The day after that, the makeover was underway.

"I was bored," said Moorer. "I was

(Continued on page 40)

Michael Moorer

(Continued from page 39)

sick of doing nothing with myself, and I suddenly became very passionate about what I should have been doing all along. I decided I wanted to fight again. Not for other people. This time I want to fight for me. I wanted to fight so I could become a champion again."

And it is this very will that propelled Moorer back into a place where the only shots they serve are full of desire, not whiskey.

Moorer now yearns to add yet another defining clip to his highlight reel. In this one, it is he, and not Foreman or Holyfield, hovering above a fallen victim with his fists thrust into the air.

As Moorer slowly tore through the cobwebs in anticipation for the comeback, it also allowed him time to reflect on mistakes that shaped an ugly past.

"The time off made me grow up," said Moorer. "It allowed me to see things a lot more clearly and to mature into a man."

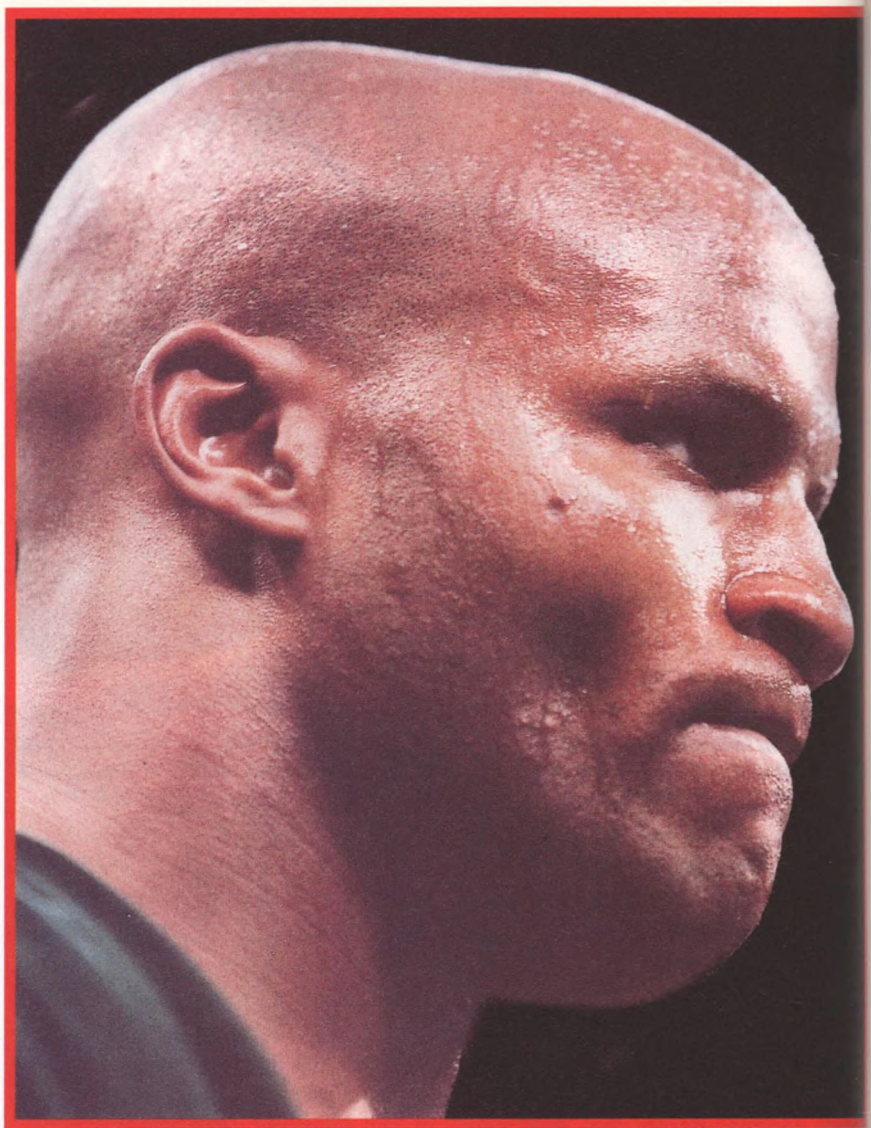
When Moorer approached Roach in early-2001 about a second go-round, the trainer hardly recognized the slimming southpaw. Once a raving headcase, Moorer was now a hardened and polished man, eager to get straight down to business.

"He's been like a completely different guy," said Roach. "His tone, his attitude, it's been completely different. He's not just a more coachable athlete. Overall, he's a much better person, too. Before I had to contend with all the moods he'd bring with him. I never knew what Michael was going to show up to work. I don't have that problem anymore."

Roach points out that each training camp preceding the four comeback fights has been nothing short of stellar.

"Before, he'd always show up late or with this big entourage," Roach added. "Now, he shows up alone, ready to go to work. The only one he ever brings to the gym now is his dog."

In the past, the only dog at camp was the lazy Moorer himself. Now, Roach delightfully finds that he's working like one. But with each passing fight, as the spare tire around his waist withers away to nothing, it seems that so have many of Moorer's physical gifts.



As he thinks about his future, Moorer knows he wants to erase the memory of knockout defeats at the hands of fellow former champions George Foreman and Evander Holyfield. But many feel that the 34-year-old Moorer may have already squandered his best years.

As Moorer sets his sights on a third heavyweight crown, it is clear that a decade of irresponsible living and questionable habits have both dulled his chiseled tools and sapped his fistic capabilities.

"Technically, he's about as sound as any fighter I've ever worked with," said Roach. "There's very little work to be done in that department. And for the first time in a long time, he appears to really have his head on straight. He hasn't needed much motivation. So I guess my big concern is getting that body back into shape and seeing what he can do with it."

Although Steward applied the fundamental teachings and Atlas served as the mental mentor, Roach is a tad unsure about his current role with Moorer, who readily admits that mistakes of the past have left his trainer with a troubled and heaping mess to work with. Therefore, Roach doesn't quite know what Moorer is in need of this time around.

One thing is for sure, as he somehow tries to shape this aging shadow back into a heavyweight champion. Freddie Roach has one heck of a cleanup duty to dig into.

Ted Bodenrader is a freelance writer based in Boston and a regular contributor to this magazine.

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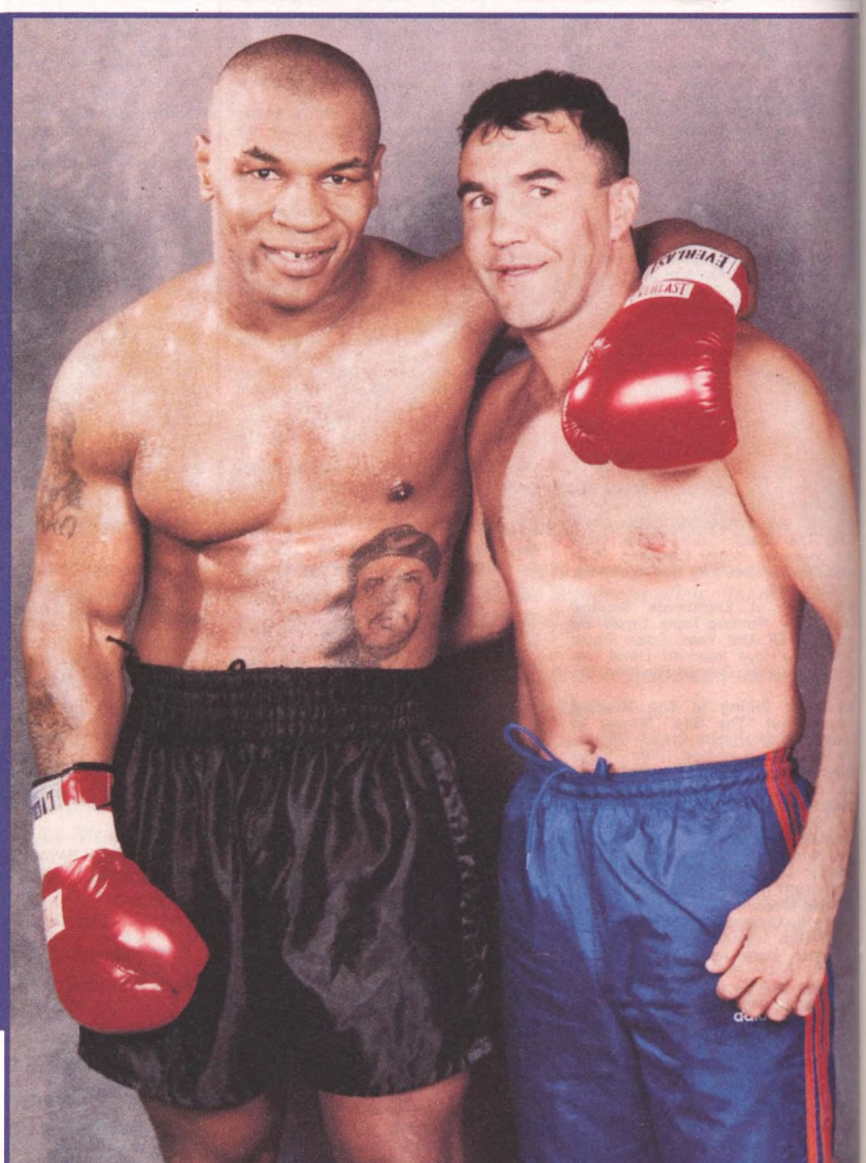
JEFF FENECH

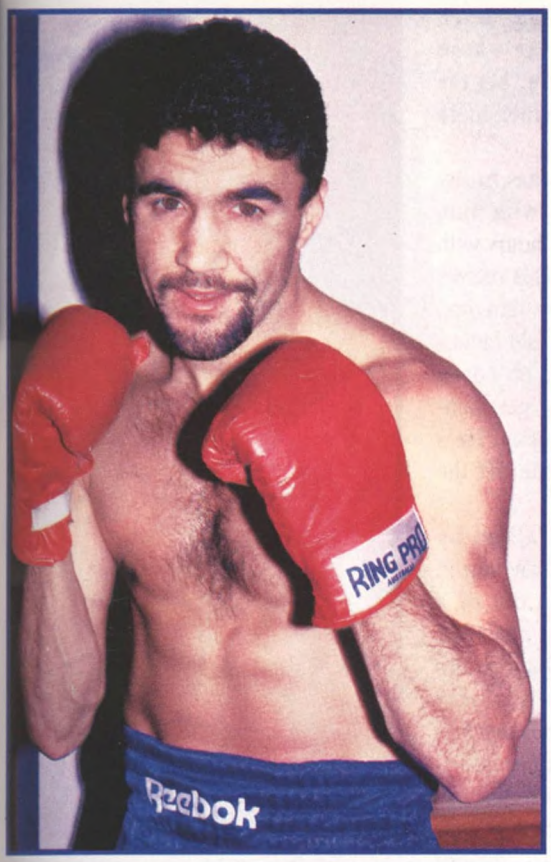
"I've Worked My Ass Off To Get Where I Am Today"



Fenech is both a friend and fan of Mike Tyson, and sometimes stays at the former heavyweight champion's Las Vegas mansion when he's in town. Fenech also believes that Tyson can beat current heavyweight champion Lennox Lewis.

By Brian Doogan

Jeff is a name of German origin and it means divinely peaceful. So that no one might be confused, Jeff Fenech boxed under the sobriquet "The Marrickville Mauler" in a career that left a trail



Fenech is the greatest Australia-born fighter of all-time. He won titles at bantamweight, junior feather, and featherweight during his 28-3-1 (21) professional career and was recently elected to the International Boxing Hall of Fame.

of destruction all the way from Marrickville—the Sydney suburb where he grew up—to the world stage Down Under, where he invited a succession of champions and challengers to share in the same fate that was neither divine nor peaceful for any of them. Fenech's style was to suffocate opponents with such relentlessly overwhelming force that they knew very quickly there would be no divine peace while they remained in his company.

For most, this was never long. Of his 28 victims, 21 were dispensed well out of earshot of the final bell, and his three defeats came in his last five bouts when his coordination was shot because of years of injecting cortisone into his pain-wracked hands. Fenech was one of the ultimate men of war.

In a few weeks he will be inducted into the Hall of Fame in Canastota, the quaint village in upstate New York that is the fight world's Valhalla. His first appearance on the ballot, having been retired for the required five years, prompted the panel of experts to pass a verdict that for too many years Fenech seemed to be denied. Because all but three of his bouts took place in his native Australia, he never received the recognition his talent warranted. Even in his celebrated encounter against Azumah Nelson in Las Vegas in June 1991, when the judges scored the fight a draw after Fenech had tamed the African warrior and done enough to capture his fourth world title, he was no longer at his best. The eighth-round knockout he suffered in the rematch nine months later proved his powers had waned. But Fenech at his best was a phenomenon.

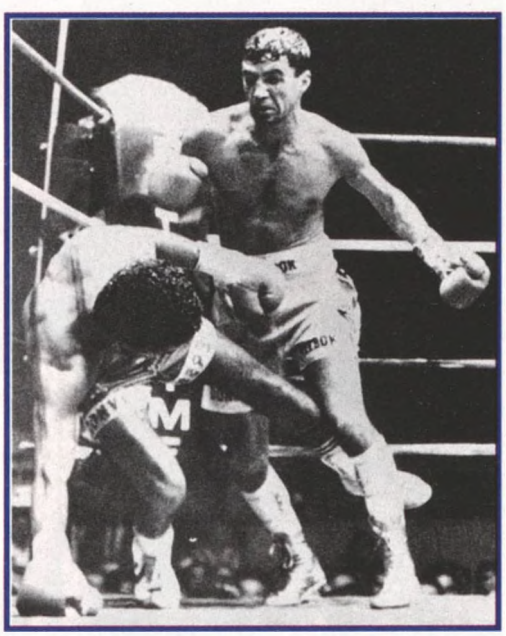
His home in the Five Dock area of Sydney is furnished with the memorabilia of a Hall of Fame career, the belts, the trophies, the gloves, the pictures on the wall. The tapes of his fights, however, provide the real verification of Fenech's virtuosity. Jerome Coffee, Daniel Zaragoza, Victor Callejas, and Marcos Villasana not only failed to subdue his remorseless attacks to their sore heads and more sore bodies, collectively they struggled to win a single round. Even to take a step backward seemed a heresy to the mauler from Marrickville. Especially on a March night in Melbourne in 1988 for the vacant WBC featherweight title against the Puerto Rican, Callejas, who had knocked out 21 of his 24 opponents since dropping a four-round decision on his debut.

"To go into that fight with a broken hand and dominate the way I did was amazing," Fenech said as we watched the action, his visitor's enthrallment shared by him, the fighter on the screen and the fighter in the room still one and the same. "But I had hand problems all my life. This fight was no different. Callejas was a really tough fighter who would resort to anything. He headbutted me, thumbed me in the eye, used his elbow whenever he could, and Richard Steele, the referee, did nothing about it. My nose was busted and my hands were so sore. I can still remember the excruciating pain I was in when I came home. I sat in the bath crying. Putting my hands in the hot water was killing me.

"I had to overcome a lot that night. I fought him with one hand and was able to punch and roll with one hand. I showed that night I was as skillful as anybody. If someone asks me what my greatest fight was, I say it was Callejas."

It is as a trainer, promoter, and night-club and bar owner, as well as his interests in property and sports equipment manufacturing (he has his own "Fenech" brand) that preoccupies him now. His success after hanging up the gloves has secured him financial well-being he could only have dreamed of in his fighting days.

"I made all my money after boxing. Fighting my whole career in Australia kept me away from the big bucks. But being successful in boxing helped me to capitalize on my name," he said. "I wanted to make sure I was successful after boxing to show people I'm not an idiot. People think fighters are idiots, that inevitably we will end up broke. Well,



Fenech thinks that his 10th-round TKO of Victor Callejas to capture the WBC featherweight title in 1988 was his greatest fight. Fenech's hands, which gave him serious problems throughout his career, were particularly painful afterward.

PHOTO BY FRANK VITUCCI

I've been in the s_ _ _ house and now I'm in the penthouse, and I'm staying there.

"I'm proud of what I've done. I am regularly doing talks for big businesses, I get involved with sponsoring aspiring athletes, and I've done it all with my wife, Suzee. It's not the norm, but I've worked my ass off to get where I am today and I'm not going to bow down to anyone who thinks I shouldn't be where I now am."

The walls in his house are testament to the esteem in which he is held by fighting men. Evander Holyfield is on prominent display and has signed several of the framed photos, as have many of the others who have it onto Fenech's wall. But it is another former world heavyweight champion whose photos take pride of place. Mike Tyson and Fenech are close.

He has conditioned Tyson for several of his recent fights and may even be playing a more active role if it were not for the fact that he is loathe to leave for any long period of time the Team Fenech stable he has built up in Sydney. He has lived with Tyson in his Las Vegas home and has not a bad word to say about a man who is frequently his own worst enemy. What the public sees of Tyson is a figure whose wild side has made him an ogre, but the Tyson Fenech knows is altogether more benevolent.

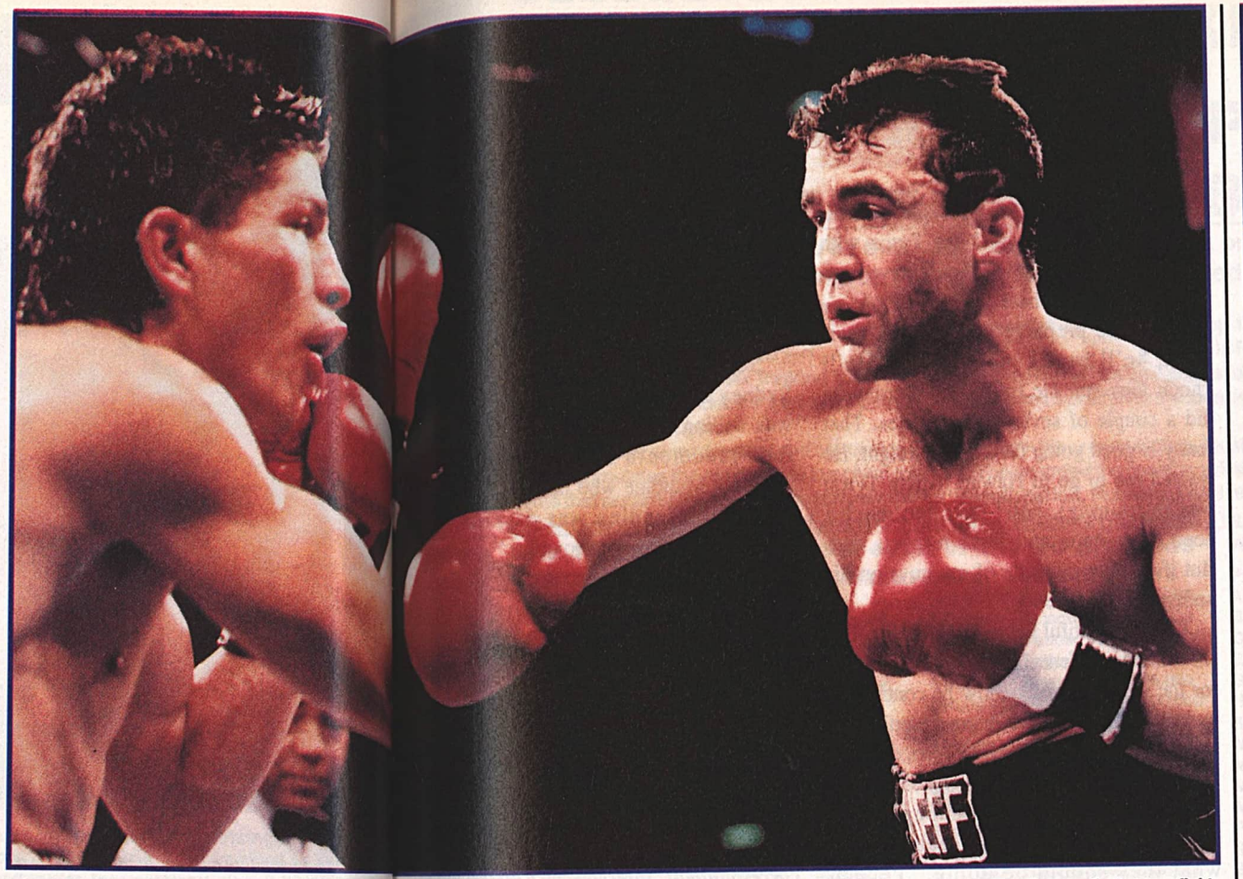
"I don't care what anybody has to say about Mike Tyson. I've lived with him, eaten with him, spent countless hours with him. I've ridden on the back of his motorbike," said Fenech. "I have seen him stop to sign autographs for kids, for old ladies. Let me tell you, the good things he's done far outweigh the bad. Don King gets publicity for all he's done for charity. He's donated all the money he made off the back of Mike Tyson.

"He's helping Mike McCallum by bringing him onto his camp. I saw him in Glasgow call Ken Buchanan out of a room filled with people, people who were ignoring this great former champion, and Mike made him feel like somebody. What happened at the press conference in New York need not have happened. Lennox Lewis was more at fault because he assaulted Mike. He landed the first blow. If Mike had wanted to land the left hook he threw at the bodyguard, he would have. But look, there should have been people stood between them. Mike's a fighter; he's no choirboy.

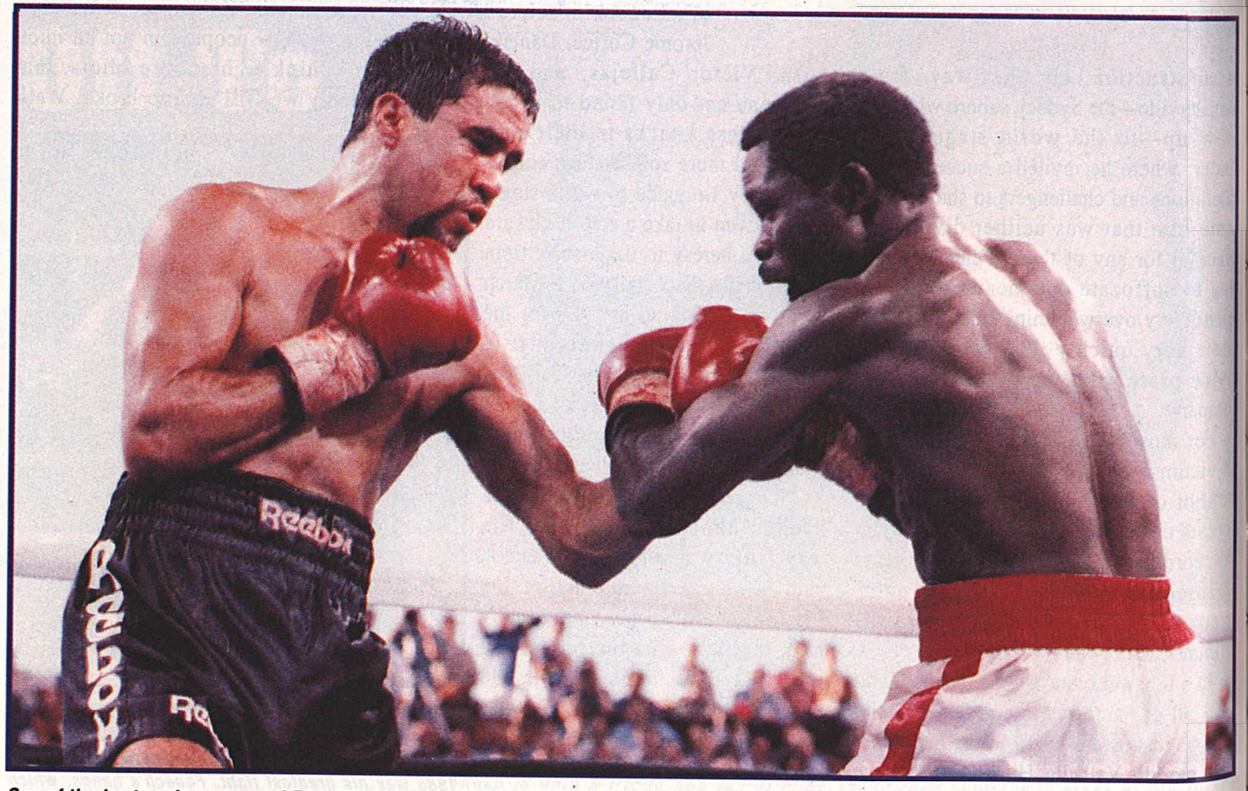
"That's what I admire about Evander Holyfield. After Mike bit his ears in their rematch, he said publicly that he forgave him. Why can't others forgive him too? People are too vindictive where Mike Tyson is concerned. But they forgive Muhammad Ali, even though he's been married four times and played behind his wives' backs. Listen, if a girl comes to see me at night in my room, I don't expect she's come for coffee.

"Mike got a little carried away at the New York press conference. He needs stronger people around him. If they're being paid, the people with him, they've got to grab him in that kind of situation, but there's nobody strong enough. In the heat of the moment I've reacted like him too. As an amateur, I bit one of my opponents out of sheer frustration. I didn't realize what I was doing. So I've been in exactly the same position as Mike. I'm a hothead too. My father always said that if someone is good enough to do something to

(Continued on page 46)



Fenech launched a comeback in 1995 by halting Tialano Tovar in Atlantic City (pictured). But two fights later, he was TKO'd by then-IBF lightweight titleholder Philip Holiday, and hung up his gloves for good.



One of the best performances of Fenech's career came in June 1991 against Azumah Nelson, but it was ruined when Nelson retained the WBC 130-pound belt with a controversial draw. The Australian got a rematch the next year, but was stopped.

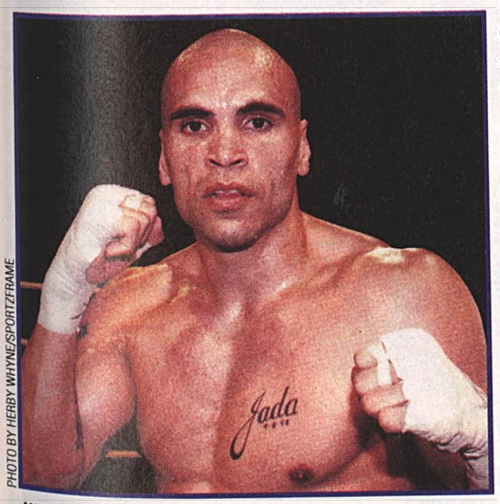
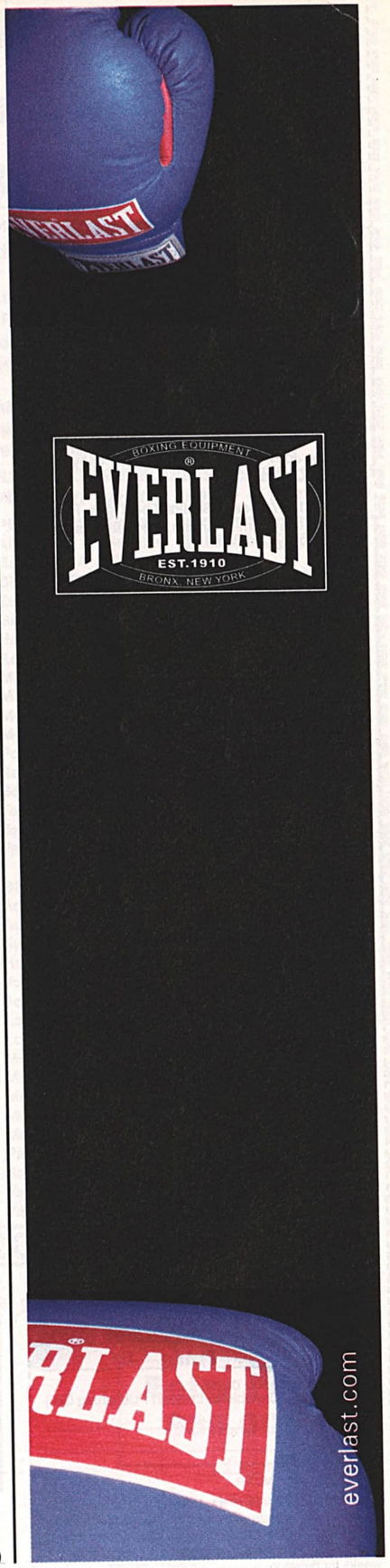


PHOTO BY HERBY WHYNE/SPORTZFRAME

Will Fenech lace 'em up one more time? An Australian promoter recently tried to lure him back into the ring for a grudge match with his controversial countryman, super middleweight Anthony Mundine (pictured). So far, however, all they've traded has been verbal insults.



'60s & '70s ISSUES

With Muhammad Ali, Carlos Monzon, Jose Napoles, and Roberto Duran leading the way, the 1960s and 1970s was surely a star-studded era. THE RING, of course, was around to cover all of these superstars and their superbouts. A limited supply of back issues from those decades are still available for $10 each (including postage and handling).

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Jeff Fenech

(Continued from page 45)

you, they should be good enough to take it back. Lennox Lewis hit Mike Tyson with a straight right hand. He should have been prepared to take it back.

"If Mike prepares properly for their fight, he'll beat Lennox Lewis. He'll knock him out. He told me yesterday he did a couple of seven-minute miles. That really is good going for a heavyweight. He wanted me to go to Hawaii (where Tyson was in training), but I have too much I need to do here, and Mike respects that. But if he gets a couple of my guys on his undercard, I'll be over."

On the beautiful February afternoon THE RING met with Fenech, he had been filming for the weekly boxing show he contributes to on Sky Television. A young unbeaten super middleweight, Danny Green, dropped by to talk about his training.

"There simply aren't enough good trainers around who can teach fighters what they should be doing," Fenech asserted. "It's no good telling them to throw the hook, cross their right hand. Unless you show them how to throw the hook, unless you're able to show them, it means nothing."

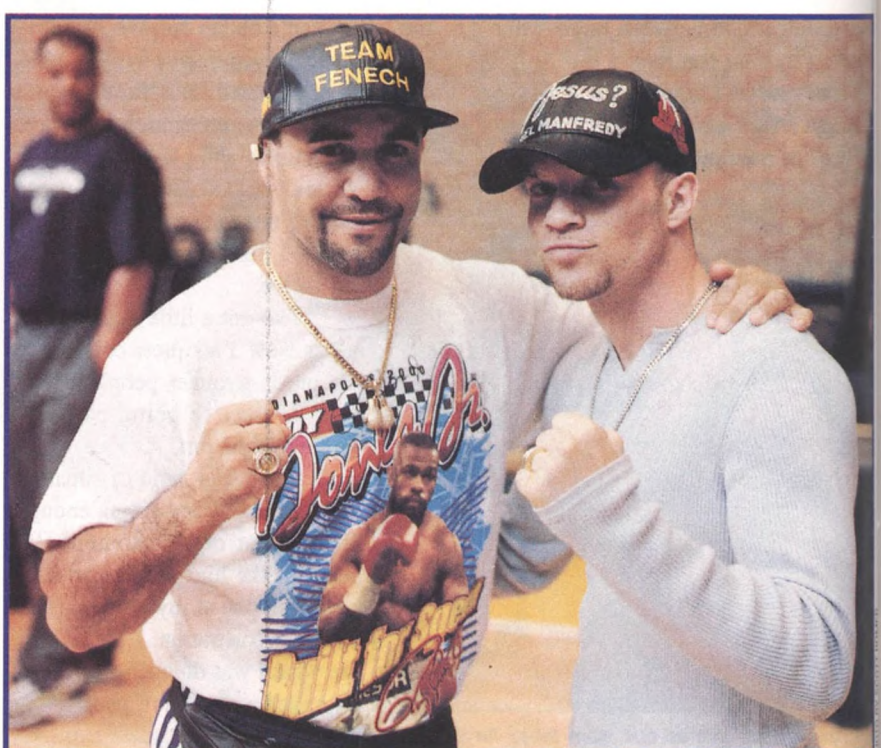
Fenech's two lovely daughters mean everything to him and his wife, Suzee. The trip to Canastota will be special too.

"I'm delighted. It's great to get recognition for a lot of hard work," he said about his Hall of Fame induction. "It's the ultimate accolade, and I'm very proud and excited."

Several weeks later, a report in Sydney's *Daily Telegraph* revealed he was willing to come out of retirement to face loudmouth super middleweight Anthony Mundine who had called Fenech "a bum." Mundine was described by Australia's finest ever boxer as "a comedian, not a fighter." Promoter Angelo Hyder predicted it could be "the most watched sporting event in the history of Australia."

In his prime, Fenech could have given the weight away and it would not have been a contest. In retirement, he can rest easy, safe in the knowledge that his fighting past is worth far more than many who believe they have a fighting future. ■

Brian Doogan, THE RING'S European correspondent, interviewed Fenech while on holiday in Australia.



These days, Fenech makes frequent journeys to America with the Australian fighters he trains, and on one such trip he had a chance to pose with lightweight contender Angel Manfredy. Fenech will be back in the U.S.A. this June for his Hall of Fame induction.

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Corley, D	$90,000	Baek, J	$75,000
Diaz, A	$85,000	Brown, J	$85,000
Hatton, R	$85,000	Cassamiyor, J	$100,000
Hopkins, D	$60,000	Castillo, A	$85,000
Hurtado, D	$80,000	Chavez, J	$95,000
Judah, Z	$105,000	Forbes, S	$110,000
Julio, E	$95,000	Freitas, A	$135,000
Leija, J	$75,000	Garcia, R	$70,000
Mitchell, S	$90,000	Gomez, M	$40,000
Reid, T	$60,000	Gonzalez, A	$50,000
Tackie, B	$90,000	Hernandez, C	$40,000
Tszyu, K	$150,000	N'Dou, P	$80,000
Urkal, O	$90,000	Pearson, L	$95,000
Ward, M	$50,000	Peden, R	$65,000
Williams, R	$90,000	Sim, L	$65,000

BELOW FEATHER	
Adams, C	$90,000
Austin, T	$135,000
Ayala, P	$130,000
Hussein, H	$90,000
Johnson, M	$90,000
Jorrin, W	$105,000
Larios, O	$90,000
Lucero, E	$80,000
Machado, F	$110,000
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'40s MIDDLEWEIGHT CHARLEY PARHAM

The Slugging Liar

By Pete Ehrmann

It was Sir Winston Churchill who said, "Men occasionally stumble over the truth, then pick themselves up and hurry off as if nothing had happened." Charley Parham stumbled often, not only over the truth, but also in the act of launching the roundhouse punches that made the 1940s middleweight contender one of the most exciting fighters of his time. When the latter happened, Parham would haul himself up and resume firing, and more often than not eventually put the other guy out in spectacular fashion.

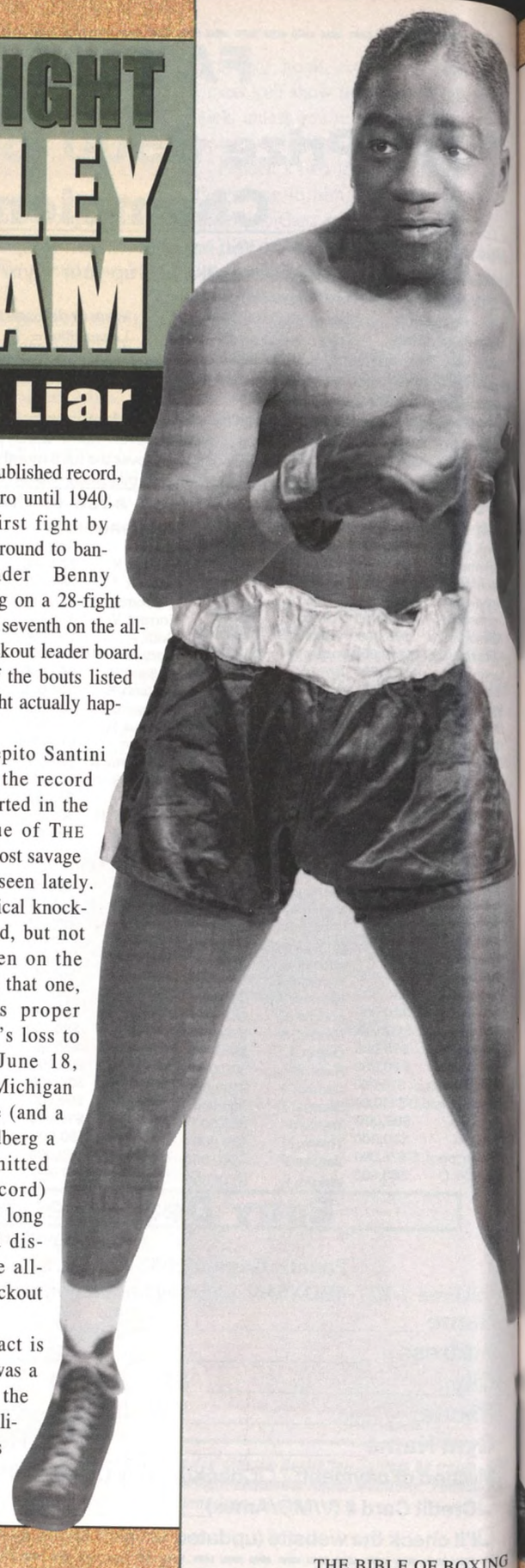
But Parham's tussles with the truth were even more riveting than his fights, because when the man known as "Chiller Charley" and "The Mayhem Man" stumbled in that regard, the resulting pratfall often registered on the Richter scale. In fact, Parham owns a unique place in the annals of boxing in that he may be the only figure in the history of the sport whose veracity was once put to the test of truth serum, in a headline-making episode concerning an alleged bribe attempt that left the criminal justice system as discombobulated as victims of Parham's trademark left hook.

Parham was already a veteran boxer when he moved to Milwaukee, Wisconsin, from his native Detroit around 1941. He had won a Michigan Golden Gloves championship and been named "Outstanding Boxer" of the tournament. Parham was a bantamweight then, just 118 pounds. After he turned pro in 1939, however, it wasn't skillful boxing that earned Parham glowing notices, but the big punch that ended most of his early fights.

According to his published record, Parham didn't turn pro until 1940, and then lost his first fight by knockout in the 10th round to bantamweight contender Benny Goldberg before going on a 28-fight kayo tear that put him seventh on the all-time consecutive knockout leader board. But in fact several of the bouts listed after the Goldberg fight actually happened *before* it.

His bout with Pepito Santini didn't make it into the record books, but was reported in the September '39 issue of THE RING as "one of the most savage bantamweight duels seen lately. Santini won by technical knockout in the fifth round, but not before both had been on the floor." Even without that one, when placed in its proper chronology, Parham's loss to Goldberg in their June 18, 1940, fight for the Michigan state 118-pound title (and a decision loss to Goldberg a month later also omitted from Parham's record) interrupted Parham's long knockout string and disqualify him from the all-time consecutive knockout pantheon.

For all that, the fact is that Charley Parham was a thrilling fighter with the kind of lay-'em-out ability feared by opponents and loved by fans. By 1942, correspondents for THE RING were invariably putting "sensational" before his name in their accounts of his bouts, most of which Parham did win by knockout. By then, the 5'3" Parham was no longer a bantamweight. He was a chunky 140-pounder towered over by his opponents, who nevertheless had their hands full with the man who hit, according to THE RING's Johnny Cox, "like a heavyweight."



Milwaukee fans got their first look at him in September of that year. Parham had hooked up with Pete Bass, a local barber who managed fighters. In the early-'30s, "Pete The Barber," as Bass was known, had brought another youngster from Detroit to Milwaukee and put him to work shining shoes in his barbershop between fights. But Holman Williams eventually left town and went on to boxing fame under new management. Bass figured to prevent that from happening with his new ace by signing Parham to a 10-year contract. Little did he know that, as Charley himself later confessed under the influence of the truth serum administered in regard to another matter, "I lie an awful lot. I lie habitually and profusely."

Parham liked big words, and even used them more or less correctly, although the boxer, whose mother was only 13 years old when he was born, never graduated from high school. But it was his educated left hook that brought crowds to their feet as it swept opponents off theirs.

"Charley Parham, a little black bull, landed a leaping left hook on Billy Parsons' chin for a knockout after 1:58 of the first round," reported Russ Lynch in the *Milwaukee Journal*, writing of Parham's first local outing. "[Parsons'] mouth fell open and he seemed to be speaking. Then he tried to get up and fell on his face."

The now politically incorrect nickname was repeated ad nauseum as Parham bulled his way to a succession of exciting wins in both his new hometown and in Chicago, many of which came via hook while Parham was hopelessly behind on points. Often when the punch missed its target, its momentum would send Charley crashing head-first to the canvas himself.

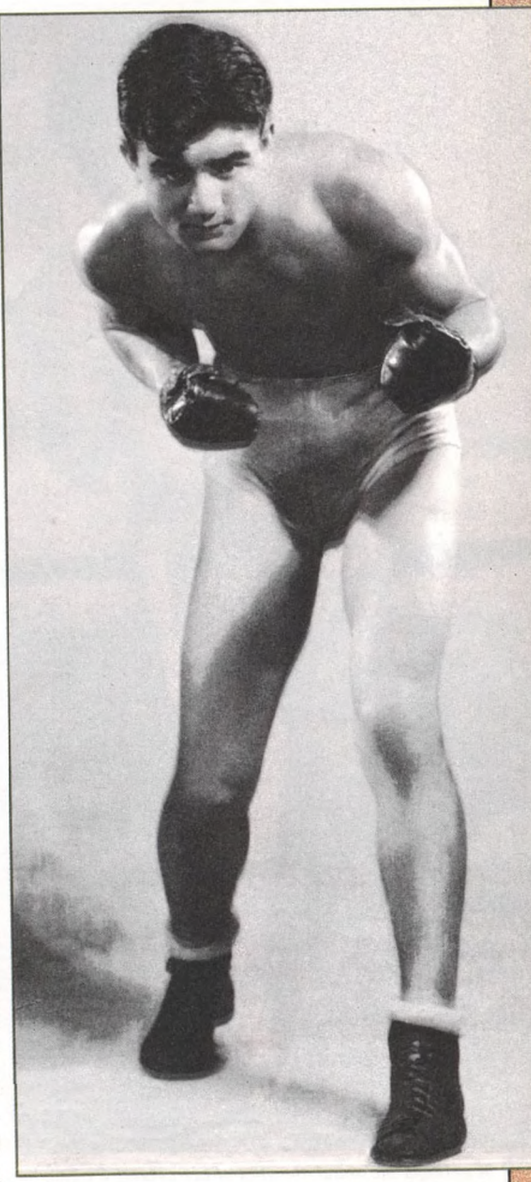
Parham's fights were as scientific as a Punch-and-Judy skit. Detroit's O'Neill Bell was a top welterweight prospect in the mid-'40s. He knocked down Parham six times in winning an eight-round decision at Chicago Stadium in November '44, but "The Mayhem Man" got up every time and knocked Bell down once, and made it one of the most exciting fights seen in the Windy City that year.

Parham won the Wisconsin 147-pound title by belting out Savior Canadeo in three rounds in April '45. One writeup called him the "singing slugger," referring to Parham's penchant for crooning in the gym and in amateur shows in nightclubs along Walnut Street, Milwaukee's Harlem. Parham, who once bragged that he sang in "the key of Frank Sinatra," even hoped to make a second career out of singing, and he must've at least been able to carry a tune because the night before he knocked out contender Bobby Richardson at the Auditorium on June 19, 1945, he was on stage at the Riverside Theater performing with no less than the world-famous Lionel Hampton Orchestra. A picture in the newspaper showed Parham, looking natty in a pinstriped, double-breasted suit, warbling into a microphone as Hampton, standing alongside him, conducted the orchestra.

But it wasn't all nightclubs and knockouts for Milwaukee's new idol, who, according to a profile in THE RING, was "so religious he's never without the Bible," and who always insisted, after getting into his boxing trunks for a fight, on placing the Good Book "in the right-hand pocket of his trousers" because "luck is with him when that's done."

Pete The Barber probably felt like taking that Bible and whacking Parham in the head with it after Charley deserted him for the Eddie Metrie stable. Bass sued for breach of contract and, according to Russ Lynch, "the dispute revealed Parham as a cheerful liar and a willing penman. He signed a plethora of contracts, counter-contracts, sworn statements, and foresworn statements." Bass ended up getting $1,750, and then got out of the managing business.

The National Boxing Association listed Parham among its top welterweight contenders in its ratings for July 1945. The champion was Freddy "Red" Cochrane. "If [he] could be coaxed into the ring," Lynch wrote, "Parham would be the champion." But instead, contender Izzy Jannazzo came to town to meet Parham next. Jannazzo, 30, had been fighting for 12 years, and had met the best in the world. The bout sold out the Auditorium—proof, said Lynch, that "Charley The Chiller certainly has caught the fancy of Milwaukee. Not only boxing fans, but many who heretofore have shown little



One of Parham's first major fights was against crafty welterweight contender Izzy Jannazzo (pictured). Outboxed in the early going, the heavy-handed Parham came on strong in the late rounds, but still lost the decision.

interest in fisticuffs are talking about The Mayhem Man's chances against Jannazzo."

Lynch figured the Brooklyn veteran would win unless he got careless. "Charley is such a bum, except for his wallop, that a good boxer finds him easy pickings in the early rounds, then is apt to get careless later."

That's about what happened, with Jannazzo, eight inches taller, staying clear of Parham's mighty swings in the first part of the scheduled 10-rounder, but then fading as Parham began to find the range. In the eighth, the clever Izzy probably saved himself from a knockout loss by pretending to be hurt by an inadvertently low punch as Parham was knocking him around but good. Parham held up, giving his foe time to regroup and last the round.

The decision went to Jannazzo, but the cheers belonged to Parham, and the same was true after a rematch in September at the Auditorium.

The back-to-back losses didn't detract at all from Parham's popularity. Jannazzo had been too smart to mix it up with him. That's all Parham's next opponent knew how to do in the ring. On paper, the December 3 match at Chicago Stadium was a real testosterone special, pitting two of the game's hardest-swinging bruisers in what shaped up, at least figuratively, as the grandest bull fight this side of Tijuana. In the corner opposite Milwaukee's "little black bull" that night was the "Bronx Bull" himself, later known through his print and film autobiographies of the same name as the "Raging Bull."

In perhaps the worst showing of his career, Parham was knocked down in every round of his sixth-round TKO loss to future middleweight champion Jake LaMotta (pictured). Despite his defeats, "Chiller Charley" remained a fan favorite throughout his career.

Jake LaMotta later became world middleweight champion and a member of the International Boxing Hall of Fame. Nothing Parham did in front of 9,000-plus fans that night put that future in the slightest jeopardy. In fact, it was one of LaMotta's easiest fights for the simple reason that Chiller Charley was nearly frozen with fear just occupying the same ring as the first man to defeat Sugar Ray Robinson.

"LaMotta didn't even work up a sweat to stop Parham in 0:59 of the sixth round," reported THE RING's Gene Engel. The Milwaukee man was knocked down in every round, and the *Milwaukee Journal* said Parham was "scared and bewildered" because "someone told the Walnut St. bulldog a lot of stories about LaMotta." Who knows? Maybe somebody just put his Bible in the wrong pocket.

Parham's shot at the big time may have been blown big time, but more victories and greater controversy were still ahead for The Mayhem Man.

Art Brown was a middling welterweight from Chicago who'd been knocked out by Parham in June '45. In a rematch in Milwaukee on August 26 of the next year, Parham and Brown overshadowed the non-title featherweight match between champion Willie Pep and Doll Rafferty by slugging one another around for eight rounds. The verdict was a draw, and a third fight between them was set for just two weeks later, this time as the headline attraction at the Auditorium.

Parham won the unanimous 10-round decision after what the *Journal's* Sam Levy called "a typical Pier 9 brawl." But the big fireworks were ignited in the dressing room afterward when Parham told state boxing commission secretary Fred Saddy that he'd been offered $1,000 to let Brown win the fight.

District Attorney William McCawley promptly issued an arrest warrant for tavern-keeper Harry Klein, whom Parham fingered as the one who'd visited him several times in the past week to dangle the bribe offer, which Parham said he rejected because his "reputation was at stake."

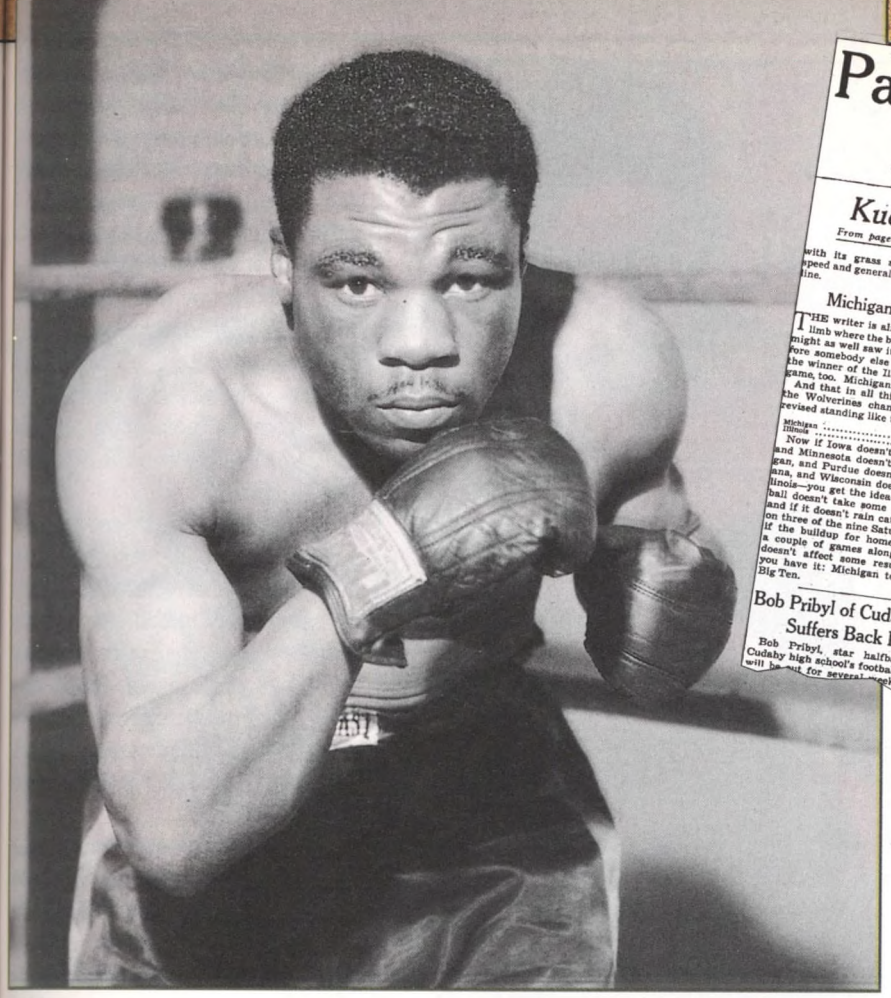
"You can always build your reputation up again," was Klein's reply, according to Parham.

In its September 19 edition, the *Journal* exposed the whole scheme in a front page story detailing how local gambling boss Oscar Plotkin had instigated the bribe attempt, and then, when Parham declined to go along, spread the word anyway that the fight was a sure thing for Brown, so that rival gambling boss Louis Simon would drop a bundle on the fight.

But an article that same day in the sports section reported that Parham was now denying everything. Klein hadn't offered a bribe, he said, but wanted only to buy his contract.

"I wanted publicity, that's why I lied," Parham told D.A. McCawley. "Today I'm telling the truth. The truth is the big thing in my life. I'm ready to go to jail if necessary for telling a lie yesterday. I'm all through as a fighter. I have plans of being a singer now."

McCawley slapped the boxer into protective custody, which obviously should've been done right after the fight, and, in an



Parham Wins in 10; Reveals Bribe Offer

Kuechle
From page 8, column 4

with its grass singeing backfield speed and generally solid if not deep line.

Michigan to Win

THE writer is already out on the limb where the buds sprout, so he might as well saw it off himself before somebody else does, and pick the winner of the Illinois-Michigan game, too. Michigan.

And that in all this would make the Wolverines champions with a revised standing like this:

	W	L	T
Michigan	6	1	1
Illinois	5	2	1

Now if Iowa doesn't beat Illinois, and Minnesota doesn't beat Michigan, and Purdue doesn't beat Indiana, and Wisconsin doesn't beat Illinois—you get the idea—and if the ball doesn't take some crazy hops, and if it doesn't rain cats and dogs on three of the nine Saturdays, and if the buildup for homecoming in a couple of games along the way doesn't affect some results, there you have it: Michigan to win the Big Ten.

Bob Pribyl of Cudahy Suffers Back Injury

Bob Pribyl, star halfback on Cudahy high school's football team, will be out for several weeks with

Refused Cash to Lose Scrap

District Attorney Gets Evidence; to Make an Investigation

Fight Results Here

Charley Parham, 147½, Milwaukee, defeated Art Brown, 150, Chicago (10).

Charley Busalacchi, 149½, Milwaukee, stopped Roy Lewis, Muncie, Ind. (3).

Frank Gaudes, 155, Milwaukee, outpointed Willie Scott, 157, Chicago (6).

Gene Joyce, 137, Gary, Ind., stopped Charley Pope, 145½, Milwaukee (2).

Elverse Tonsell, 144, Gary, defeated Tommy James, 147½, Chicago (6).

Tommy Varsos, 151½, Milwaukee, knocked out Mickey Wilson, 141½, Chicago (3).

By SAM LEVY

Charley Parham won an "honest" bout at the Auditorium Tuesday night when he defeated Art Brown, Chicago Negro, in 10 slashing rounds. It was the second victory for the Walnut st. Bull over the Chicagoan in three starts. One was a knockout; the other ended in a draw.

Parham collected about $900 as his share of the $4,970 (net) gate. He could have b

Julius Fidler scored the bout 7-2 for Parham; Judge Al Baranek's card read 7-3. Judge Les De Camara had 6-5, but it was not really that close.

It was a typical Pier 9 brawl. Brown weathered two stormy sessions, the fourth and tenth rounds. If he elects to meet the Walnut st. Bull again, Brown should have his head examined.

Lewis Gives Up in Second

Roy Lewis, a mean looking southpaw from Muncie, Ind., who cannot fight, surrendered to Charley Busalacchi while seated in his corner at the end of the second round. Lewis was floored as the first round ended and stopped an illegal punch for good measure. He took a few more hard blows in the second heat and decided he had had enough for one night.

Frank Gaudes won a six round decision over Willie Scott, Chicago. Gaudes suffered a deep cut over his left eye.

A newcomer, Gene Joyce, Gary (Ind.) lightweight, looked impressive in stopping Charley Pope, Milwaukee, in two rounds. Referee Earl Olson called a halt because of a deep cut over Pope's left eye. Elverse Tonsell, Gary welterweight, defeated Tommy Janes, Chicago, in six sessions. Tommy Varsos, Milwaukee, knocked out Mickey Wilson, Chicago, in 21 seconds of the third round.

Parham engaged Art Brown (pictured) in a series of knockdown-dragout fights, but after their third encounter, "The Mayhem Man" claimed that a local gambler had tried to bribe him to throw the fight. The ensuing investigation led to one of the most bizarre episodes in boxing history.

effort to find the truth, scheduled what was, even by boxing's usual goofy standards, one of the most bizarre events ever connected with the sport.

That same morning, the little bullshooter was taken to County Hospital for Mental Diseases. Wearing slacks, a white shirt, and sweater vest, Parham laid down on a bed and was injected by Dr. Harry Landberg with sodium Amytal, popularly known as "truth serum." The drug put the boxer to sleep, and then, as the front-page story in the next day's *Journal* explained, "on the way back to full consciousness permitted him to talk without fear of the consequences."

The result was as breathtaking as one of The Chiller's fights. Things got off to a flying start before he even fell asleep, when Parham went back to his original story, claiming Klein had tried to induce him to go in the water against Brown and that he refused in order to protect "the honor and glory of Wisconsin," whose welterweight champion he was so proud to be.

But when coming out of the ether, Parham returned to version number two, calling his bribe story "a dastardly and uncouth lie" that he had concocted "just for the fun of it" and because "it would look nice in the papers, which have lots of space to waste printing stories like that."

At one point in the interrogation, Parham said his life "wasn't worth a damn," and at another he whined, "I wanna go home to my momma."

"Under the influence of the drug," reported the *Journal*, "he described himself as sadly battered by his ring battles," and "mentioned his flattened nose and the ridges round his eyes."

Four times Parham denied having been offered a bribe, and when the drug wore off he cheerfully sang a tune. After spending another night in the county jail as a material witness, Parham was back in the D.A.'s office the next morning. Incredibly, he once more maintained that Klein had offered him a bribe. With that, the exasperated McCawley decided his time was better spent jousting with murderers, muggers, and other run-of-the-mill malefactors.

"Charles Parham was ordered released today by me and the warrant against Harold Klein is withdrawn for the reason I have exhausted every means of arriving at the truth," he said. "I am satisfied Parham is in such a confused state of mind his word is not dependable and no conviction could result from any prosecution based upon Parham's conflicting stories."

A week later, the state boxing commission lifted Parham's license for six months on the ground that "his actions were detrimental and injurious to boxing in Wisconsin."

Oddly enough, the media, which had had a field day with what one paper called "L'Affaire Parham," was still bullish on the little bull in spite of his renowned unreliability. Under the column heading "Whipping Boy," Lynch wrote, "there seems to be little doubt that fear, probably threats, made Parham change his story. Charley fought the best he knew how against Brown. He has always fought his best here, except when badly overmatched. He is not a crooked fighter. He is the victim of circumstances—and of his penchant for lying."

Either the commission agreed, or, more likely, Parham was just too strong a draw-

ing card to be shelved for half-a-year. In just two months, the ring board relented, and The Chiller was back in action.

Any lingering residue from the bribery fiasco was spectacularly dispelled by what may have been the greatest, most exciting fight in the rich history of Milwaukee boxing, on June 18, 1947. Parham's opponent was William Johnson, another Chicagoan, who was the little bull's pugilistic clone, a free-swinging brawler who didn't mind picking himself off the canvas to get another whack at the other guy.

Johnson did it seven times that night, and Parham went down four times himself during what Lynch called "the wildest 10 rounds of battling" seen at the Auditorium.

The decision for Parham was unanimous, and in the dressing room afterward, as the fighters congratulated each other, Johnson counted his many bruises and hoped they wouldn't keep him from his next fight, scheduled for just one week later in Chicago.

"Who're you fighting?" asked Parham.

"You," answered Johnson.

That's how it worked then. There was no three- or four-month interval filled with canned insults and phony hype. Fighters just fought. And the following week, at the Chicago Coliseum, Parham and Johnson picked right up where they'd left off. In the third round, Parham knocked Johnson down with a left hook. Johnson got up. But as The Chiller went in for the kill, he got caught with a straight right on the button that put him down for the count and then some. That had never happened before, and nobody was more incredulous than Parham.

"I still don't believe I was knocked out," he said. "It was a mistake, and if they give me another crack at Johnson, I'll stiffen him."

The rubber match was set for July 14 in Milwaukee. Come to think of it, it did seem like someone was in an unseemly hurry to milk the Parham-Johnson rivalry for all it was worth. The reason, it turned out, was that Parham was already half-blind thanks to a cataract on his left eye. His condition had actually been a poorly kept secret for over a year, and a commission functionary had even showed up at the gym one day to hold up some fingers for the fighter to count. "I could distinguish them," Parham related later, "So he said, 'You're okay to fight.'"

When Jimmy Doyle (pictured) died after his 1947 bout with Ray Robinson, the tragedy indirectly ended Parham's career. "The Chiller" had been partially blind for some time due to cataracts, and the boxing commission, wary of another calamity, yanked his license.

But now there was a problem. On June 24, two days before Parham-Johnson II, welterweight champion Sugar Ray Robinson knocked out Jimmy Doyle in eight rounds in Cleveland. Doyle died of a brain injury afterward, and it was determined that he had entered the ring as already damaged goods, with head injuries suffered in a previous bout.

The media were up in arms, so when the commission met to approve the third Parham-Johnson fight, it was suggested that The Chiller's visual acuity ought to be determined by means a little more rigorous than the finger test. The sudden concern wasn't unanimous. Among the comments recorded at the meeting were, "He's been fighting for five years, so why bring up his eyesight now?" And "Fans want to see that rematch, even if Charley has to be led into the ring." This from the governing body that had punished Parham for being injurious to boxing.

Even after the cataract was discovered, the boxing board's specialist cutely stated that "Parham's vision is the same today in both eyes as it was June 24," as if that made it all right for him to fight again. But no dice. With the press scrutinizing their deliberations, the commissioners lifted Parham's license "in the best interests of boxing."

This time there would be no reprieve for The Mayhem Man. After surgery on his left eye, he applied for reinstatement, but was rebuffed. Parham never fought again, and the singing career didn't pan out, either. Never married, Parham ended up in a nursing home in 1970 after suffering a stroke. He got his picture in the paper again that year when a local promoter presented him with a donation of $100.

A few months later, after another stroke, the man who, wrote *Milwaukee Sentinel* boxing writer Ray Grody, "bombed his way into the hearts of fight fans with his exciting punching," died at age 48.

It's almost a shame after all these years, and on top of all the other shameful things that happened to Parham, to yank off his fig leaf of boxing immortality by correcting the record regarding those 28 straight knockouts. But even without it, he stands worthy of respect and recognition as a true warrior and, despite his other transgressions, an honorable one when he could've profited from acting otherwise.

And that's no bull. ■

Pete Ehrmann is a freelance writer based in West Allis, Wisconsin, and a regular contributor to this magazine.

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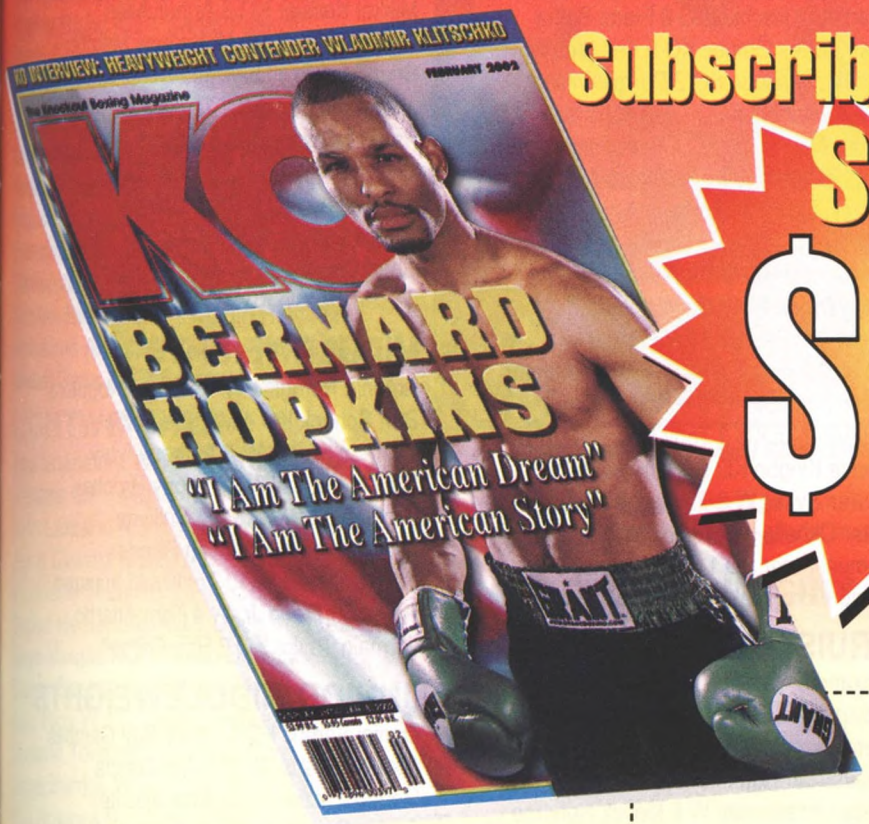

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SUMMARY

HEAVYWEIGHTS

Wladimir Klitschko KO 8 Frans Botha
Juan Carlos Gomez KO 5 Ken Murphy
Tim Witherspoon KO 2 Darroll Wilson
Corey Sanders KO 8 Oleg Maskaev
Henry Akinwande KO 1 Curt Paige
Michael Grant KO 4 Reynaldo Minus
James Toney W 10 Sione Asipeli
Jeremy Williams KO 1 Louis Monaco
Cliff Couser KO 5 Vladislav Andreev
Mitch Green W 12 Danny Wofford
Timo Hoffman KO 7 Balu Sauer
Albert Sosnowski KO 1 Jacob Odhiambo
Denis Bakhtov KO 5 Mathew Ellis
Kali Meehan KO 3 Tony Fiso
Yacine Kingbo KO 9 Alain Martin
Taurus Sykes W 8 Talmadge Griffis
Peter Okhello KO 6 Auckland Aumatagui
Samuel Peter KO 1 Julius Joyner
Paolo Vidoz KO 3 Craig Tomlinson

CRUISERWEIGHTS

Alexandre Gurov KO 1 Patrick Madzinga
Kelvin Davis W 12 Arthur Williams
Pietro Aurino W 10 Roberto Dominguez
Sebastiaan Rothmann W 12 Gary Delaney
Jesper Kristiansen W 6 Merick Roberge
Daniel Rowsell KO 8 Peter Kariuki
Rich LaMontagne KO 2 Wilfredo Muniz
Mike Rodgers KO 1 Ray Hunter

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS

Clinton Woods KO 3 Clint Johnson
Mads Larsen W 8 Mohamed Siluvangi
Thomas Ulrich KO 3 Marco Antonio Duarte
Michael Rush W 10 Orlando Rivera
Tony Oakey W 12 Kostya Shvets
Paul Briggs KO 4 Paul Smallman
Jimmy Murray KO 2 Renier Dorfling
Chris Mills KO 2 Brian Zordich

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS

Sven Ottke W 12 Rick Thornberry
(Retains IBF Title)
Eric Lucas W 12 Vinny Paz
(Retains WBC Title)
Markus Beyer KO 7 Antoine Robinson
Danilo Haussler W 12 Glenn Catley
Bryant Brannon KO 2 Pat Lawlor
David Starie KO 1 Marc Bargero
Anthony Mundine W 10 Brad Mayo
Jurgen Brahmer KO 2 Roberto Martins
Joe Gatti KO 4 Tim Shocks
Mikkel Kessler KO 6 Arthur Allen
Fighting Nordin W 12 Sydney Msuthu
Brian Magee W 8 Vage Kocharyn
Jean-Paul Mendy W 10 Rachid Kanfouah
Aaron Norwood KO 3 Robert Terrell
Carmine Tufano KO 2 Brad Baker
Willard Lewis D 8 Chad Sawyer
James Lubwama KO 4 Jameel Wilson
Chad Dawson W 4 Martin Desjardins
Jerson Ravelo KO 4 Ted Don Miller

MIDDLEWEIGHTS

Antonio Perugino W 10 Eliseo Nogueira
Bert Schenk KO 4 Mugurel Sebe
Wilfredo Rivera W 6 Anthony Ivory
Raul Marquez W 8 Anthony Brooks
Jerry Elliott W 12 Sean Sullivan
Lee Blundell KO 3 Ryan Rhodes
Satoru Suzuki W 10 Toshiyuki Inazawa
Peter Manfredo Jr. W 4 Tom Attardo
Jermain Taylor KO 3 Ron Carnell

JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHTS

Daniel Santos KO 11 Yory Boy Campas
Steve Roberts W 12 Kirino Garcia
Robert Frazier KO 3 Jose Aponte
Carlos Bojorquez KO 6 Norberto Sandoval
Tokunbo Olajide KO 4 Trevor Brown
Yuri Tsarenko W 12 Andrei Pestriaev
William Gare W 12 Ndifelani Manyelenyele
Fitz Vanderpool KO 4 Floyd Trumpet
Nader Hamdan W 8 Sean Sullivan
Michael Rask W 8 Scott Dixon
Victor Fesetchko W 10 Anthony Ivory
Yuri Foreman KO 3 Tommy Attardo
Anthony Thompson KO 2 Elvisto Mills

WELTERWEIGHTS

Antonio Margarito KO 10 Antonio Diaz
Thomas Damgaard KO 2 Wilfrido Ruiz
Omar Weis W 10 Hector Camacho Jr.
Jose Luis Cruz D 12 Carlos Baldomir
Golden Johnson KO 11 Chantel Stanciel
Felix Flores KO 6 Franchie Torres
Sam Garr W Disq. 9 Vince Harris
Christian Bladt W 6 Michel Raynaud
Teruo Nagase D 10 Yoshinori Takenaka
Gabe Rodriguez W 10 Vince Harris
Luca Messi W 10 Antonio Lauri
Kermit Cintron KO 2 Alexis Perez
Alexander Vetoux KO 1 Ashley Whiteboy

Andre Eason KO 4 Michael Melvin
Kelson Pinto KO 4 Gustavo Tapia
Dmitriy Salita KO 3 Jacob Godinez

JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHTS

Oktay Urkal W 8 Matthews Zulu
Junior Witter KO 3 Alan Bosworth
Gianluca Branco KO 10 Allan Vester
Wayne Rigby KO 1 Sadat Puskullu
Pablo Sarmiento KO 2 Stephen Carr
Masakazu Satake W 12 Rick Roberts
Carlos Vilches KO 7 Scott DePompe
Lemuel Nelson D 12 Frank Houghtaling
Tadashi Yuba KO 7 Kiyoshi Adachi
Miguel Figueroa W 10 Brad Jensen
Francisco Corrales KO 4 Jose Perez
Demetrius Hopkins KO 5 Tyrone Wiggans
Cristian Bejarano W 6 Martin Ramirez
Mohamad Abdulaev KO 4 Jesus Santiago
Miguel Cotto KO 2 Sammy Sparkman

LIGHTWEIGHTS

Paul Spadafora W 12 Angel Manfredy
(Retains IBF Title)
Juan Lazcano KO 7 Julio Cesar Sanchez
Jesus Chavez KO 3 Gerardo Zayas
Victoriano Sosa KO 1 Luis Sosa
Carlos Hernandez KO 1 Doug Villarreal
Goyo Vargas KO 7 Cleso Delgado
Carlos Gerena W 10 Mark Burse
Aldo Rios W 10 Diego Gimenez
Tontcho Tontchev KO 6 Gustavo Corral
Jorge Barrios W 10 Victor Hugo Paz
Koji Arisawa D 10 Gota Katabuchi
Steve Murray KO 5 Viktor Baranov
Miguel Acosta W 12 Santos Rebolledo
Yoni Vargas KO 7 Ever Beleno
Calvin Davis W 8 Justo Almazan
Laszlo Komjathi W 10 Zoltan Kalocsai
Gary Balletto KO 9 Mike DiBenedetto
Sayan Sanchat KO 3 Siboniso Mdletsche
Gavin Rees W 6 Rakhim Mingaleev
Carl Johanneson W 6 Kema Muse
Juan Garza KO 3 Juan Aranda

JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHTS

Phillip Ndou KO 6 Nicolai Eremeev
Orlando Salido W 10 Lamont Pearson
Silvano Usini KO 2 Laszlo Bognar
Alex Arthur KO 10 Dariusz Snarski
Hector Julio Avila KO 5 Andres Martinez
Nate Campbell KO 4 Alric Johnson

FEATHERWEIGHTS

Juan Manuel Marquez KO 10
Robbie Peden
Scott Harrison KO 3 Tony Wehbee
Kozo Ishii KO 5 Keungchul Park
Zahir Raheem KO 4 Benito Rodriguez

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA

Junior middleweight Daniel Santos smacks Yory Boy Campas in the face with a jab

David Donis W 10 Ricardo Medina
Jose Aguiniga W 6 Ricardo Medina

JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHTS

Oscar Larios W 8 Darryl Pinckney
Enrique Sanchez Tech. Win 4
Nelson Medina
Emmanuel Lucero W 12 Frankie Archuleta
Junichi Watanabe W 10 Norihisa Tomimoto
Vincenzo Gigliotti KO 9
Francesco D'Arcangelo
Armando Guerrero KO 2 Len Martinez
Somsak Sithchatchawal KO 3
Hari Suahariyadi
Nobuto Ikehara KO 4
Singhdum Kaewvishnu

BANTAMWEIGHTS

Cruz Carbajal KO 9 Mauricio Martinez
Adan Vargas KO 5 Diego Andrade
Ratanachai Vorapin W 8 Ray Llagas
Hideki Todaka KO 3
Khunchit Kiatgeija
Francisco Tejedor W 12
Cuauhtemoc Gomez
Spend Abazi W 12 Dimitri Kirilov
Silence Mabuza KO 6 Jose Sanjuanelo
Takuya Kiya KO 8
Saengcharoen Mahasaph Condo
Carlos Madrigal KO 5 Oswaldo Guerrero
Pone Saengmorakot W 6
Dechdamrong Muangsurin
Jose Navarro W 8 Luis De La Rosa
Clarence Vinson KO 2 Shane Langford
Clarence Vinson KO 5 Sandro Oviedo

JUNIOR BANTAMWEIGHTS

Masamori Tokuyama KO 9 Kazuhiro Ryuko
(Retains WBC Title)
Alexander Munoz KO 8 Celes Kobayashi
(Wins WBA Title)
Gerry Penalosa Tech. Win 8 Joel Avila
Luis Bolanos W 10 Jose Luis Graterol
Sot Sot Veerapol W 10 Lito Panding

FLYWEIGHTS

Baby Jake Matlala KO 7 Juan Herrera
Wandee Singwangcha W 6
Christian Casino
Alexander Mahmutov W 12 Mimoun Chent
Gerson Guerrero KO 2 Mariano Gonzalez
Denkaosan Kaovichit KO 1
Hamadani Tomagola
Jose Antonio Lopez Bueno W 8
Daniel Kodjo
Cyril Bellanger W 10 Franck Gorjux
Noriyuki Komatsu KO 4
Phisetsh Voh Suraphol
Andrea Sarritzu W 6 Pal Lakatos
Brian Viloria KO 4 Leonardo Gutierrez

JUNIOR FLYWEIGHTS

Tatsuo Hayashida KO 10
Nobuyuki Enomoto
Edgar Velazquez KO 5 Francisco Cadevilla
Deeden Kengkaroon KO 3 Roy Saraki
Jun Kitano W 10 Keisuke Yokoyama

STRAWWEIGHTS

Roberto Leyva W 10 Manny Melchor
(Non-Title Bout)
Sarikalek Ekarin KO 3 Jojo Rodrigo

BOXING EQUIPMENT
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BRONX, NEW YORK

PRESENTS

The RING

FIGHTER *of the* MONTH

Perhaps it's better to be lucky than good, but it's best to be both. Paulie Ayala, whose luck helped see him through in back-to-back-to-back controversial decision wins over Johnny Tapia, Hugo Dianzo, and Bones Adams, showed just how good he can be in the rematch with Adams, taking a lopsided decision that he earned, fair and square, beyond any sort of doubt.

Ayala's performances had been spotty at best since his career-defining win in the first of two bouts with Tapia, but he looked as sharp as ever against Adams on February 23, keeping up a relentless pace, dictating the terms, and laying a licking on Bones' body. It was a triumph for clean living and hard training, two ingredients you need to go the 12-round distance as often as Ayala does.

And to *win* every time you go the 12-round distance, you may or may not need to be lucky, but you definitely need to be good. His performance against Adams reminded us that Ayala, now the champion of the world at 122 pounds, is one darned good fighter.

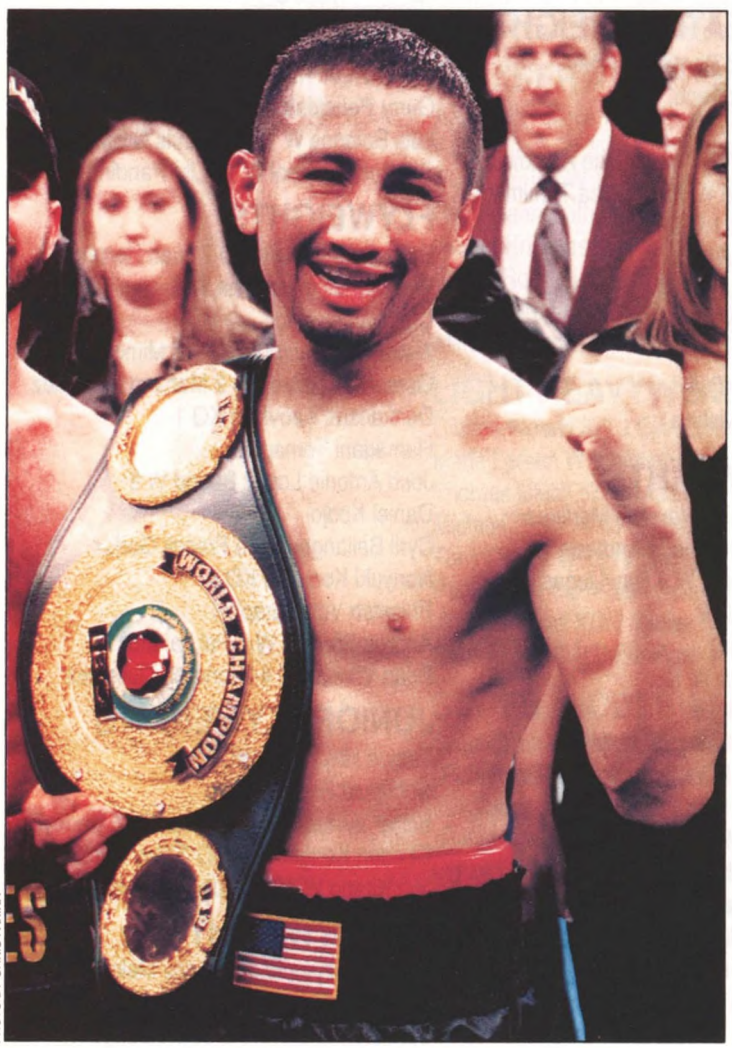

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA

Paulie Ayala

RINGSIDE REPORTS

Paulie Ayala W 12 Bones Adams

Las Vegas, Nevada: When the idea of a rematch with Adams was first broached with Ayala last August, he demurred.

"What would it prove?" he asked rhetorically. "I won."

Indeed, Ayala won that August 4, 2001, encounter, but only by a razor-thin and hotly disputed split decision.

Eventually, Ayala came around to the idea that a rematch with Adams was a good thing and, after scoring a ridiculously easy unanimous decision victory to capture THE RING's vacant junior featherweight world title, Ayala was beginning to enjoy the thought of rematches.

"Not bad, huh?" he said, minutes after pounding out a clear-cut win at the Mandalay Bay Resort & Casino that will put him in line for a few big-money fights.

Ayala was really a bantamweight the first time he fought Adams and was moving up simply to seek out a payday. But in the six months between fights, Ayala, 31, pumped a lot of iron and built himself into a legitimate junior feather.

He wasn't a 122-pound Evander Holyfield, perhaps, but he was clearly bigger and stronger than Adams on this night. Ayala, 122, Fort Worth, Texas, went to the body early and often, and the work downstairs paid big dividends. Adams, 121½, Henderson, Kentucky, insisted the body attack had no impact, but his actions belied his words. Not only was his ribcage crimson from Ayala's unceasing assault on his midsection, but the 27-year-old Adams seemed reluctant to go toe-to-toe and mix it up with Ayala the way he did in the first fight.

That made it a fairly lopsided fight, and Ayala won at least nine rounds on every judge's card. Duane Ford (USA) and Paul Smith (USA) scored it 118-110, while Patricia Jarman-Manning (USA) saw it 117-111. THE RING card was 118-110 and was identical to Ford's.

"I'd seen a lot of things I didn't do in the first fight," Ayala, 34-1 (22), said. "I had him hurt in the second round, but I stopped throwing the straight left, the double-jab, and even working the body. The body work was the significant part this time and it slowed him down a lot.

"The first fight I waited and tried to counter him a little more after the second round, which allowed him to get off his punches. But this time I was getting off first a lot more often than not. That kept him off his game of even trying to counter. If you have a punch in your face or even your stomach, it's hard to counter off that if it's a solid shot."

Adams, 41-5-3 (19), was frustrated, but said it was Ayala's well-known propensity to work all three minutes of every round that was the difference. Adams said Ayala simply produced more.

"He outhustled me," Adams said glumly. "I got outworked."

The referee was Kenny Bayless (USA).

Television: HBO

Promoter: Top Rank

(2-23-02)

Kevin Iole

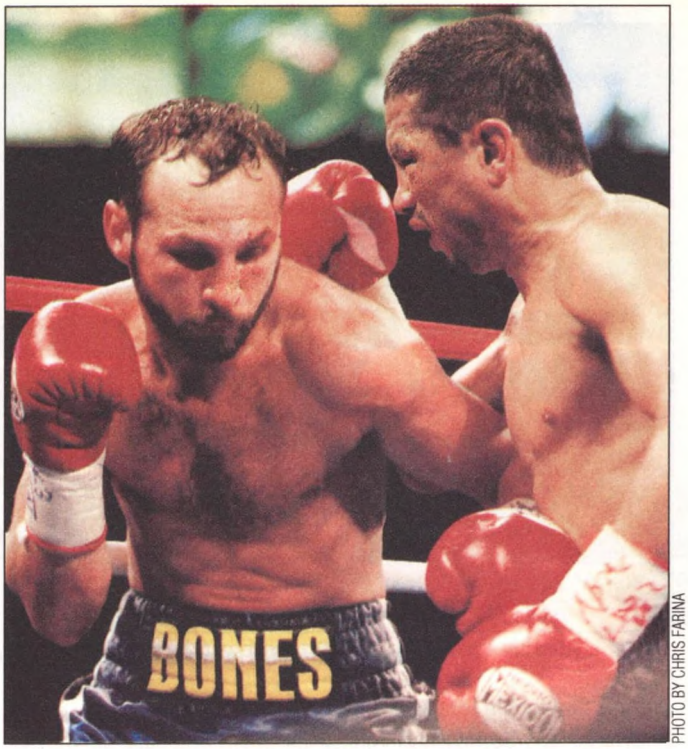

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA

Ayala applies pressure against Adams

Rafael Marquez KO 8 Mark Johnson

Las Vegas, Nevada: Johnson's nickname is "Too Sharp," but he proved instead to be either too old, too small, or both against Marquez in their bantamweight showdown at Mandalay Bay. Four months after Marquez scored a highly controversial decision over Johnson in a fight in which Johnson was initially announced as the winner, the Mexican ended all doubts.

Marquez started slowly, but then began to pummel two-division former titlist Johnson as the fight went on and wound up knocking him down three times. He was down once in the seventh and twice in the eighth, prompting referee Tony Weeks (USA) to wave the bout off without a count after the final knockdown.

"I knew I could get him," said Marquez, who earned a shot at IBF bantamweight king Tim Austin with the victory.

Johnson said after the fight he will move down to 115 pounds, but at 30 years old, he doesn't look like he has much left. He was in the fight early only because Marquez, 26, was studying him in the opening few rounds and wasn't keeping a brisk pace.

Once Marquez, 117, stepped on the accelerator, Johnson, 117½, Washington, D.C., didn't have a chance. THE RING card had Marquez ahead, 68-64, through the seven completed rounds, giving him all but the first and third rounds.

Johnson was trying to avoid Marquez' right hand and seemed to have success neutralizing it early. But Marquez simply began stepping to his left, and that was the adjustment that he needed. He began landing the right with regularity, and it was clear he was much stronger than Johnson and that the rights were having an impact.

The beginning of the end came after Marquez dug a left to the body late in the seventh that made Johnson wince in pain. Marquez followed with a perfectly executed right, dropping Johnson for the first time in his outstanding career. Johnson was saved by the bell,

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA

Johnson is attended to as Marquez walks off in victory

but was on wobbly legs as he made his way to his corner.

Marquez, who had hurt Johnson in their first fight in Corpus Christi, Texas, but didn't follow up on the advantage, wasn't about to make the same mistake twice. A left to the body put Johnson down for the first time in the eighth, and then a straight right sent Johnson, 40-3 (27) with 1 no-contest, onto his back, looking completely beaten. Weeks halted it at 2:41 of the round.

"I was stronger and I knew I could eventually get him," said Marquez, 27-3 (25).

Promoter: Top Rank
Television: HBO
(2-23-02)
Kevin Iole

Jean-Marc Mormeck KO 8 Virgil Hill

Marseilles, France: In the country where Hill, 190, Bismarck, North Dakota, resurrected his career with a first-round knockout of Fabrice Tiozzo in December 2000, his time in the top flight perhaps finally came to an end. Unheralded Mormeck, 190, France, dominated the fight until Hill remained seated on his stool at the start of the ninth round, the Frenchman capturing the WBA cruiserweight title and extracting some revenge for his countryman at the Palais des Sports. It was Hill's first defense of the title he claimed from Tiozzo.

The 38-year-old American was engaging in his 26th title bout. Mormeck was competing in his first, and he was clearly the fresher man who, at 29, can look forward to a few more good years in which he may perhaps prove a worthy successor to a fighter who has been a credit to his sport. Hill won the WBA light heavyweight title in September 1987 with a fourth-round knockout of Leslie Stewart in Atlantic City, and almost 15 years later he was trying to push back the challenge of a younger man and the rapid, inexorable advance of time.

"I hurt my hand in the second round," said Hill, 46-4 (22). "But that's not to take away from his great win. He was the better man tonight and that's why he won."

From the third round it was clear that Hill, who had claimed the opening couple of rounds with the use of his still accomplished boxing skills, was involved in an uphill struggle, a left hook to the abdomen causing him severe discomfort and encouraging Mormeck to continue to take the fight to his older opponent. By the fourth round, Hill was feeling the pace, and several lefts by Mormeck landed solidly and were cheered roundly by the 7,000 supporters. They roared even louder in the fifth when Hill was pinned on the ropes with punches raining in on him.

As the punches kept coming in with Hill struggling to evade them, the increasingly weary titlist dropped his mouthpiece in the seventh and later sustained a cut on his right eyebrow. Blood was smeared on his bruised cheeks as he cut a pitiful sight in the eighth round, and when he walked back to his stool he knew the game was up. Referee Stanley Christodoulou (South Africa) acknowledged Hill's surrender moments later, making Mormeck the WBA king.

"He wasn't as hard as I thought he would be," said Mormeck, 27-2 (19). "I wanted this belt badly and I did what it took to win it. Of course he is not the fighter he was at 20, but he's still a terrific boxer. Now I hope to hold my title as long as he did."

We can only assume Mormeck is talking about Hill's light heavyweight reign, because his title tenure at cruiser was nothing to emulate.

Promoter: AB Stars
(2-23-02)
Brian Doogan

Paul Spadafora W 12 Angel Manfredy

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania: This was supposed to be the coming-out performance for Spadafora to show the boxing world that he is indeed a legitimate beltholder in the lightweight division. While his hometown fans gushed at his every move, even when he ran in some spurts, he still has a way to go before being mentioned in the same breath as potential future nemesis Floyd Mayweather.

"I know I could've done a lot more than I did," said Spadafora, who won a close but unanimous decision—115-113 on the cards of judges Don Ackerman (USA), Dave Hess (USA), and George Kachulis (USA)—at Duquesne University's A.J. Palumbo Center before a raucous crowd of 6,000-plus. "I don't think I hurt him at all. I hurt his spirits."

After a shaky start in which Manfredy, 39-6-1 (29), found the mark with a pair of lead rights and a stiff right uppercut at the bell to buzz the IBF titlist, Spadafora found a groove and was almost untouchable the rest of the way.

Spadafora, 135, would unleash five- and six-punch combinations at will as he swept the middle rounds. While most of them

didn't land cleanly and didn't have much visible effect, Manfredy, 134½, Hobart, Indiana, would fall victim to being too patient. Instead of cutting off the ring and countering in between Spadafora's flurries, he'd wait until after he was done and walk straight in. By then, however, Manfredy was wading into the wind, as the crafty southpaw would escape every time.

"I came into his hometown. I knew I needed a knockout to win," said Manfredy, who predictably whined about robbery in the same vein as he did after convincing losses to Mayweather and Stevie Johnston. "He wasn't effective with nothing. That's okay, I'm not going to cry about it."

If Manfredy, 27, actually believed he needed to make such a statement with his fists, he rarely fought like it. He was aggressive in spurts, but generally appeared to be relying on the judges to give him the benefit of the doubt for forcing the action while accomplishing little. When it was over, a sour Manfredy accused Spadafora of foul play by using his shoulders and elbows when manhandling him inside.

"He has every right to complain," said Spadafora, who sported a huge knot on his forehead from a first-round head clash. "He started it with the headbutts inside."

While Manfredy threw 247 more punches, he landed only 19 percent, according to CompuBox. Just 10 percent of his jabs (35 of 346) found a home. Spadafora wasn't much better, landing 28 percent (207 of 731), but he did score with more than twice as many jabs (77 of 364).

Spadafora, making his sixth defense, coasted down the stretch to make the score closer than necessary. If it were any place other than his hometown, Spadafora, 35-0 (14), would've been assaulted with rotten tomatoes for literally running in spurts during the championship rounds. But the victory was a major accomplishment for him nonetheless.

After a series of bouts against nameless no-hopers, Spadafora, 26, has taken the first step toward shedding the image of a protected titleholder. HBO hopes to match Spadafora against the winner of the Leonard Dorin-Raul Balbi rematch for the WBA belt, and have the winner of that bout face the victor of the April 20 fight for the WBC strap between Jose Luis Castillo and Mayweather.

"I'm a boxer. I know I'm a boxer," said Spadafora. "If I ain't a boxer, I ain't a champion."

The referee was Earnie Shariff (USA).

Television: HBO

Promoter: Mike Acri

(3-9-02)

Johnnie Whitehead

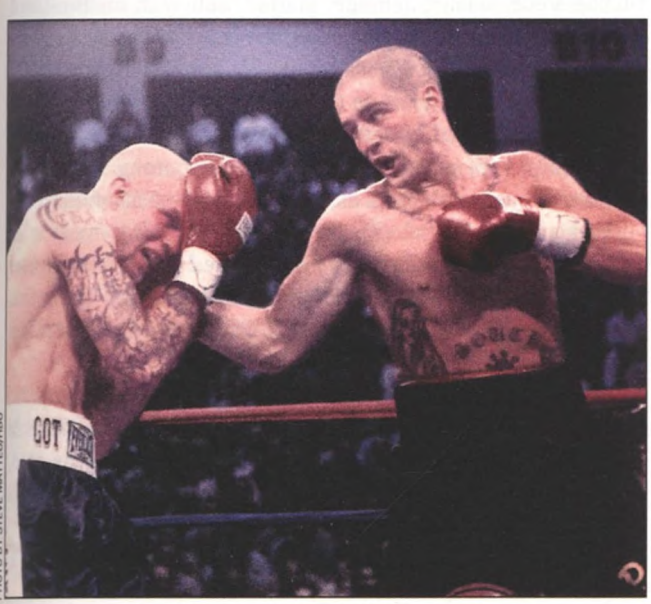

PHOTO BY STEVE MATTEO/HBO

Spadafora walks Manfredy into a hook

Alexander Munoz KO 8 Celes Kobayashi

Tokyo, Japan: Unbeaten Venezuelan puncher Munoz, 115, impressively dethroned defending WBA super flyweight titlist Kobayashi, 115, Japan, as he displayed devastating power in dropping him five times en route to a fine TKO victory at 1:31 of the eighth round at Bodokan Martial Arts Hall in Tokyo. Munoz, 23, sent the 29-year-old beltholder to the deck in the second, sixth, and seventh, plus twice in the eighth. All three judges had Munoz far ahead at the time of the stoppage. Guy Jutras (Canada) and Derek Milham (Australia) scored it 69-62, and Jose Laurino (Uruguay) saw it 68-62.

Munoz came out with a furious attack in the opening round, battering Kobayashi with all his power for the full three minutes. Kobayashi covered himself up well throughout, though, and sometimes retaliated with his southpaw lefts to the breadbasket. But in the second, Munoz caught him with a vicious left hook that caused him to kneel down and take an eight-count.

Kobayashi, making his second title defense, came back and took command in the third, as he often connected with lefts to the face of the aggressive Venezuelan. They fought on nearly even terms in the fourth, with Munoz crudely attacking and Kobayashi responding with effective combos to the belly.

Munoz regained control by shaking up his opponent with a left uppercut to the chin in the fifth. In the sixth, Munoz floored him again with a right-left-right combination, but Kobayashi, 24-5-3 (14), desperately fought back to survive the crisis.

The eighth round saw Munoz, 22-0 (22), force Kobayashi to the ropes and drop him with a left hook. When the Japanese titlist regained his feet, he was put down once more by a wicked right, prompting referee Stanley Christodoulou (South Africa) to declare a halt to the massacre. The beaten Kobayashi stayed prone on the canvas for several minutes.

The newly crowned WBA king, who looked like a young Wilfredo Gomez, celebrated his triumph and dedicated his coronation to the aficionados of his mother country. Munoz avenged the losses to Kobayashi of his senior compatriots Leo Gamez and Jesus "Kiki" Rojas.

Promoter: Akihiko Honda's Teiken Promotions

(3-9-02)

Joe Koizumi

Eric Lucas W 12 Vinny Paz

Ledyard, Connecticut: In the final round, battered and bloody, with his right eye swelling shut, Paz charged out and engaged WBC super middleweight titlist Lucas with a locomotive flurry of left hooks and overhand rights, bringing the crowd to its feet one more time in frenzied anticipation of yet another miracle. But the

storied career of the man known for most of his life as Vinny Pazienza has gone beyond the time when determination and fire, combined with his always-underrated boxing skills, could produce those miracles.

After Canadian Lucas, 167, withstood that opening onslaught in the 12th round of their title fight at Foxwoods Casino, Paz began running headlong into Lucas' long left jab. Patiently counterpunching, the 30-year-old Lucas calmly regained control despite chants of "U-S-A, U-S-A" from the crowd of 2,200 on hand. When the bell rang ending the fight, it was just one more round Paz had lost, another gallant three minutes of fury that couldn't quite best Lucas—or the calendar.

Paz, 39, had seemed finished a year ago, when Aaron Davis busted him up in this very ring, stopping him on cuts in eight rounds. But by July, Paz was back, aiming to cap his career with 50 wins and promising not to overdo it or disappoint his many fans. Three wins over journeymen led to a shot at Lucas' 168-pound title. Lucas, making his second defense of the crown he won last July, got a nice payday of approximately $300,000 plus a high visibility date on American TV through ESPN2's *Friday Night Fights*. Paz, 168, Cranston, Rhode Island, got $90,000 and the chance to end his career with both 50 wins and another belt.

A side bet between the corners that Lucas, 35-4-3 (13), would stop Paz, 49-10 (30), within the first frame seemed ridiculous, given the noted Paz resilience and Lucas' low percentage of kayos. But Paz' dreams of upsetting the taller, longer-armed Lucas were equally farfetched. Paz' previous title reigns were at lightweight (1987-'88) and junior middleweight (1991-'92), but if his style and hunger let him also compete effectively with most super middleweights, it was obvious early on that he was just too short to get inside on Lucas.

That first round side bet went by the boards as Paz used his footwork and head movement to mostly avoid Lucas in round one, but the titleholder, who'd entered the ring in a Canadian Olympic hockey uniform, dominated with his steady left jab. By the second round, Paz was bleeding from a cut on the outside of his right eyebrow, and Lucas began homing in his left hook on the wound. Becoming a bit desperate with the ring doctors visiting his corner already, Paz charged inside and forced Lucas to brawl in the third, landing telling uppercuts. But Lucas regained control, and Paz' lunging attacks were ineffective through rounds four and five. Paz worked off his own in-and-out jabbing to set up a good sixth stanza, however, winning it with another inside rush that had Lucas backing up and the big room roaring with cheers.

PHOTO BY MIKE GREENHILL

Lucas' youth and skill prove too much for faded Paz

An early Lucas right cross that might have dropped many a man seemed only to irritate Paz in round eight, and he traded evenly with the Canadian in a toe-to-toe slugout. But Lucas kept consistently sticking him as he bore in, and the Paz rally soon petered out amid precise and economical Lucas counters. Even in that last glorious round, Paz' early scoring was cancelled out by Lucas' eventual control and steady accuracy.

The official scores were 117-112 from Alfred Asaro (France), 117-111 from Daniel Van De Wiele (Belgium), and 119-110 from Guillermo Perez (Panama). THE RING had it 118-111. CompuBox numbers supported the scores, showing Lucas landing 38 percent of his blows to just 21 percent for Paz.

"I was a little off tonight," Paz said later. "I hate to give in, I hate to admit it, but at 39 I was a little off. Time goes on."

"It was more of a tactical fight than I'd figured," Lucas said. "Vinny Paz was much harder to hit than I'd expected."

Right after the fight, Paz' future seemed undecided, and with his father battling Alzheimer's Disease while his mother battles cancer, his own physical woes aren't foremost on his mind.

"Whatever happens, I fought hard, we had fun, and we gave a lot of people a beautiful ride," he said.

Then he added, "It's not over."

But it should be.

Promoter: Jimmy Burchfield

(3-1-02)

Jay N. Miller

Yoddamrong Sithyodthong W 12 Yober Ortega

Nakhon Ratchasima, Thailand: Unbeaten mandatory challenger Yoddamrong, 122, Thailand, captured the WBA 122-pound belt as he upset awkward but hard-hitting southpaw Ortega, 122, Venezuela, by a unanimous decision over 12 rounds. Luis Rivera (USA) scored it 117-112, Erkki Meronen (Finland) saw it 118-111, and Philippe Verbeke (Belgium) had it 116-112. The referee was Armando Garcia (USA).

The Venezuelan titleholder started well with his two-fisted attack and southpaw stance, getting the better of the action in the first three rounds. But Yoddamrong, 21, solved Ortega's aggressive style and turned loose in the fourth and fifth, when he landed sharp rights followed by left hooks to the face and belly. Ortega, 32-4-1 (22), kept going forward, but Yoddamrong scored more accurate countering shots all the way, piling up points steadily.

Yoddamrong, 18-0-1 (7), got rated by the WBA thanks to an important triumph over then-highly rated Indonesian fighter Bugiarso (yes, that's his whole name) in 1999. The Thai's lone blemish was a draw against Orient & Pacific bantam champ Jess Maca in April '00.

Ortega, a 36-year-old veteran making his first defense, acquired the WBA belt by dismantling his compatriot Jose "Cheo" Rojas in Las Vegas last November. The crestfallen ex-champ said, "Yoddamrong was a difficult target to catch. I admit my defeat tonight. He was stronger and smarter than I expected."

Promoter: Songchai Ratanasuban

(2-21-02)

Joe Koizumi

Kassim Ouma W 10 Michael Lerma

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: On a night of firsts—promoter J Russell Peltz' first show at the Avenue of the Arts Palace in downtown Philly, junior middleweight contender Ouma's first fight with Peltz as his promoter, the Ugandan's first headlining appearance on ESPN2's *Friday Night Fights*—it was unfortunate for Ouma that first impressions aren't the only impressions. The fast-rising 23-year-old got off to a phenomenal start, having hardened gatekeeper Lerma on the verge of a kayo several times in the first two rounds, but Ouma eased off after Lerma survived the early onslaught, and settled for a somewhat disappointing unanimous decision win.

PHOTO BY MIKE GREENHILL

Ouma catches Lerma with a southpaw right hook

The first round was a scary exhibition of the talent of the southpaw Ouma, 154, West Palm Beach, Florida. Fellow southpaw Lerma, who had shown a sturdy chin in distance losses to Raul Marquez, J.C. Candelo, Bronco McKart, and Jason Papillion, went down from a single, hard left just a minute into the fight, and spent the rest of the round trying to survive. Ouma was aggressive with right hooks, right uppercuts, and left crosses, trying to finish Lerma, 153, Waco, Texas, but the veteran weathered the storm and even kept things interesting with a few sneaky counters.

The speedy Ouma struck again early in the second, dropping Lerma with a picture-perfect right-left combo. But the happy-go-lucky Ugandan showed his immaturity moments later. Lerma popped right up after dropping to his knees, and Ouma responded by popping him in the mush with a left hand. While Lerma melted back to the canvas, selling the foul for all it was worth, referee Joe O'Neill (USA) angrily pulled Ouma away and shoved him toward a neutral corner, lecturing the apologetic youngster and giving Lerma roughly a minute to recuperate.

After Ouma failed to finish off Lerma, 28, over the remainder of the second round, his punches gradually lost their purpose. Lerma tightened up his defense, and though Ouma was outworking him and winning most of the rounds, he never again had the Texan in serious trouble. The fifth round ended with a brief but sensational two-way exchange, but otherwise, the action was mostly humdrum. By the 10th, Ouma was carelessly coasting, and Lerma, 24-7-1 (18), needing a knockout, put up a futile final assault. It wasn't even close to enough, as judges Robert Grasso (USA) and Alan Rubinstein (USA) scored 98-90 for Ouma, and Ron Greenley (USA) had it 97-91. THE RING's card read 98-91.

"I thought I was going to take him out," said Ouma, 15-1-1 (10). "I was more powerful than he was. But I give him credit. He's a tough guy."

(2-15-02)

Eric Raskin

Yosam Choi KO 10 Shingo Yamaguchi

Chiba, Japan: Korean WBC junior flyweight titlist Choi, 108, kept his belt as he responded to the hot but light rallies of Japanese challenger Yamaguchi, 106, with solid, precise, and effective counters, dropped him with a vicious overhand right in the ninth, and finally halted him at 2:18 of the 10th at Tokyo Bay NK Hall.

Through nine rounds, Choi, 29, was comfortably ahead on all three cards. Victor Cervantes (Mexico) and Herbert Minn (USA) both had it 89-81, and Brad Vocale (Australia) scored it 88-82. But it was a more furious give-and-take fight than the tallies indicated.

Yamaguchi, having won 11 bouts straight after a dubious 0-2-1 start to his career, got off to a very good start with plenty of jabs and positive combinations in the opening session. Choi, making his third defense, found his range and began to take the initiative in the second.

The challenger kept moving well and throwing quick punches, but the Korean was in command with strong countering overhand rights, and occasionally shook up his game but less experienced opponent in the second through fifth sessions.

Yamaguchi sustained a gash caused by Choi's right hand in the sixth, but he came back with furious—if not so accurate—combinations. Choi turned loose in the seventh, making a bloody mess of Yamaguchi. He staggered the Japanese fighter with a wicked right cross and looping left hook in the eighth, and in the ninth, Choi exploded with his favorite punch, the overhand right, dropping Yamaguchi hard. The challenger promptly pulled himself up and gamely resumed fighting, but he was on rubbery legs and was lucky to be saved by the bell.

In the 10th, Yamaguchi, 11-3-1 (5), desperately attempted to force the titleholder to the ropes with a fusillade of punches, but Choi, 24-1 (13), countered beautifully, almost toppling him in the center of the ring. Referee Bruce McTavish, a Philippines-based New Zealander, wisely declared a stoppage to save him from further punishment.

Choi, who was inactive for 13 months prior to this fight, will next be obliged to meet WBC interim titlist Jorge Arce of Mexico.

Promoter: Tokashiki Promotions

(2-23-02)

Joe Koizumi ■

New Face

(Continued from page 20)

Pavlik thinks the source of his confidence comes from his amateur background. He attended the 2000 Olympic Trials as a 156-pounder, where he met rising prospects Anthony Hanshaw and Jermain Taylor. Pavlik lost to both, but each bout was close. Kelly doesn't contest the Taylor fight, an 11-5 decision loss, but he felt robbed by the Hanshaw verdict, a 15-7 setback. Still, Pavlik said he gained immeasurable self-assurance from the experience of facing fighters like Hanshaw and Taylor, who are both still undefeated as pros.

The Ghost can admit now it stung to hear the sarcasm that was aimed at him.

"No one likes to get laughed at, and a lot of times it bothered me, especially in the beginning," Kelly said. "I'd just keep my composure and wrap my hands, but I wouldn't get mad, I'd just get really, really anxious. You can't get too mad before a fight. If there was a little anger, I'd use it in the ring. I think the reason for my confidence is when I fought in the amateurs, I fought guys who had 100 fights when I had around 10 or 11 fights, and I'd lose some fights, but there was no butt whipping. They were good fights, close fights. I had 10 losses, and they were really, really close fights. That told me I could compete with those guys.

"I knew once I got into the ring, it would be a different story. There would be no more laughing. Even if I lost, they'd look at me differently. There would be more respect. A good part about it is I was able to be a little cocky to myself. I'd just have a little smile, because I knew they were probably scared of me. They saw *me* smiling after the fight."

Mike Pavlik recalls his son's amateur days, too. The father, however, looks back at those times much differently than does his son. Mike would fume over the countless times he'd travel with Kelly and listen to other fighters make Kelly the brunt of their jokes.

"They'd walk by him, point at him, and laugh," Mike Pavlik said. "I'm not kidding. The black kids would see Kelly and think they had it easy. I guess you'd say it was a sort of reverse discrimination. But there was this one time, I think it was in Cincinnati where it happened, that this white kid laughed at Kelly. I think he got the worst 45-second ass-kicking I've seen in my life.

"I was the one always getting upset. I'd tell Kelly, 'See that, see they're laughing at you, they think you're a joke.' But Kelly would stay calm. He'd answer them all in the ring. The way Kelly is is something he's gotten on his own. I certainly wouldn't look away if someone pointed or laughed at me like that. I'd get up in their face, but Kelly wouldn't stare them in their eyes. There isn't even a staredown in the ring from Kelly. He tries not to make eye contact with his opponents before fights, even in sparring matches. They may perceive that as a weakness, but that could be a mistake. There were some paybacks. We knew Kelly would get the last laugh."

Jack Loew has known Kelly and has been his trainer ever since he was 10 years old. Loew, who owns the Southside Boxing Club in Youngstown, once worked with lightweight contender Ray Lampkin. There's no doubt in Loew's mind that Kelly could be the best to ever come out of the Youngstown area, which has also produced former WBA lightweight titlist Ray "Boom Boom" Mancini and former IBF lightweight titlist Harry Arroyo.

"When I saw Kelly fight kids like Jermain Taylor and Hanshaw, who I thought we beat, I began to believe Kelly could be as good as he wanted to be," Loew said. "Kelly does not like watching tapes of fighters we have to meet, especially at this point. Kelly realizes what he has to do. He has so much confidence in himself and his ability, he'd fight Oscar De La Hoya tomorrow, he'd fight Felix Trinidad. He wouldn't worry one bit; Mike and I would worry."

There may not be any need for that until Kelly starts fighting ranked opponents. He's made easy work of everyone Top Rank has put in front of him so far. The longest he's gone in his first 12 pro bouts was three rounds.

Against Robert Dasoyan on February 23 in Las Vegas, Pavlik thought he would finally have to go the distance. Dasoyan was 14-6-4 (8) entering the fight, but, more importantly, had never been knocked out. That is, until Pavlik plowed an overhand right into Dasoyan, knocking him out cold in the second round.

Pavlik recorded his 12th knockout in as many fights, using his excellent one-punch power to take out Russian journeyman Robert Dasoyan in two rounds in late-February.

Though he's gaining a lot of notice for that overhand right, Pavlik's most dangerous punch is actually his left hook. Despite being naturally lefthanded, Pavlik chooses to box with a conventional stance and has produced eight of his 12 knockouts with the hook. And his right uppercut is also lethal. Pavlik has also shown an ability to switch stances in the middle of a fight, which can sometimes confuse an opponent.

"I've seen Pavlik three times and I think he's steadily improving," said Steve Kim, a columnist for Maxboxing.com. "He has a lot of physical tools. You don't see many middleweights at 6'3". He's a tall, rangy kid, and Top Rank has done a really nice job nurturing him, letting him fight off TV. He's really learned his craft."

And as Kim points out, Pavlik does have another very useful tool, one which ironically involves the very core of what he was prejudged on as an amateur—his skin color.

"Pavlik's definitely very promotable, and people can say want they want, but there is a large segment who want a corn-fed, white-bread fighter with some power," Kim said. "He might have been laughed at as an amateur, but Pavlik looks to me like a real fighter. He's fighting the right type of fighters for his level of development. I also want to point out that he has athletic ability. He's not a built-up New England kid. I would say within 18 months, at the furthest, he'll be a contender. Bernard Hopkins isn't going to last forever, and once Bernard leaves, the middleweight division will be wide open. I would say right now the chinks in Pavlik's armor are unknown. We don't how he'll react to taking a punch, and we'll also need to find out how he handles success."

So far Pavlik is dealing with it fine. The Dasoyan victory earned The Ghost a spot on the De La Hoya-Fernando Vargas undercard on May 4 in Las Vegas. He's also finally earned the respect of those he meets in the ring.

"At this stage, I shouldn't lose," Pavlik said. "I'll let Top Rank do whatever they decide. I have trust in them, especially Cameron Dunkin, who's doing a hell of a job. I would say hopefully within two years I'd like to fight for a world title."

At the rate Pavlik is going, that's nothing to laugh about. ■

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Alphabet Ratings

The Rankings of Boxing's Three International Governing Bodies

WBA RATINGS
(Ratings as of February 2002)

HEAVYWEIGHTS
Champ: John Ruiz (USA)
1. Kirk Johnson (CAN)
2. Evander Holyfield (USA)
3. Vitaly Klitschko (UKR)
4. Mike Tyson (USA)
5. Fres Oquendo (PR)
6. Nicolay Valouev (RUS)
7. Oliver McCall (USA)
8. Jameel McCline (USA)
9. Larry Donald (USA)
10. Hasim Rahman (USA)
11. Danny Williams (GB)
12. Lamon Brewster (USA)

CRUISERWEIGHTS
Champ: Jean Marc Mormeck (FRA)
1. Alexander Gurov (UKR)
2. James Toney (USA)
3. Wayne Braithwaite (GUY)
4. Virgil Hill (USA)
5. Fabrice Tiozzo (FRA)
6. O'Neil Bell (USA)
7. Ezra Sellers (USA)
8. Vincenzo Cantatore (ITA)
9. Luis Pineda (PAN)
10. Dale Brown (CAN)
11. Valery Brudov (RUS)
12. Louis Azille (DR)

LT. HEAVYWEIGHTS
Super Champ: Roy Jones (USA)
Champ: Bruno Girard (FRA)
1. Lou Del Valle (USA)
2. Antonio Tarver (USA)
3. Clinton Woods (GB)
4. Thomas Hansvoll (NOR)
5. David Telesco (USA)
6. Mads Larsen (DEN)
7. Reggie Johnson (USA)
8. Glencoffe Johnson (USA)
9. Glenn Kelly (AUSTRL)
10. Robert Koon (USA)
11. Julio Gonzalez (USA)
12. Montell Griffin (USA)

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Champ: Byron Mitchell (USA)
1. Mehdi Sahnoune (FRA)
2. Thomas Tate (USA)
3. David Starie (GB)
4. Antwun Echols (USA)
5. Andrei Shkalikov (RUS)
6. Dana Rosenblatt (USA)
7. Julio Cesar Green (DR)
8. Manuel Siaca (PR)
9. Omar Sheika (USA)
10. Mikkel Kessler (DEN)
11. Rudy Markussen (DEN)
12. Danilo Haussler (GER)

MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Super Champ: Bernard Hopkins (USA)
Champ: William Joppy (USA)
1. Felix Trinidad (PR)
2. Howard Eastman (GB)
3. Keith Holmes (USA)
4. Hassine Cherifi (FRA)
5. Darren Obah (AUSTRL)
6. Cristian Sanavia (ITA)
7. Ryan Rhodes (GB)
8. Tito Mendoza (PAN)
9. Sam Hill (USA)
10. Bert Schenk (GER)
11. David Reid (USA)
12. Antonio Perugino (ITA)

SUPER WELTERWEIGHTS
Champ: Fernando Vargas (USA)
1. Vacant
2. Mamadou Thiam (FRA)
3. Roman Karmazin (RUS)
4. Santiago Samaniego (PAN)
5. Daniel Santos (PR)
6. Rhoshii Wells (USA)
7. Jose Flores (MEX)
8. Frank Olsen (DEN)
9. Angel Hernandez (USA)
10. Travis Simms (USA)
11. Michael Rask (DEN)
12. Akira Ohigashi (JAP)

WELTERWEIGHTS
Champ: Andrew Lewis (GUY)
1. Ricardo Mayorga (CR)
2. Thomas Damgaard (DEN)
3. Michael Trabant (GERE)
4. Chantel Stanciel (USA)
5. Michele Piccirillo (ITA)
6. James Page (USA)
7. Jose Rivera (USA)
8. Carlos Baldomir (ARG)
9. Nick Acevedo (USA)
10. Hiroyuki Maeda (JAP)
11. Danny Perez (USA)
12. Frederic Klose (FRA)

SUPER LIGHTWEIGHTS
Super Champ: Kostya Tszyu (AUSTRL)
1. Hector Camacho Jr (PR)
2. Diobelys Hurtado (CUB)
3. Randall Bailey (USA)
4. Sharmba Mitchell (USA)
5. Khalid Rahilou (FRA)
6. Ricky Hatton (GB)
7. Oktay Urkal (TUR)
8. Gianluca Branco (ITA)
9. Arturo Gatti (CAN)
10. Antonio Diaz (USA)
11. Soulemane M'Baye (FRA)
12. Ben Tackie (USA)

LIGHTWEIGHTS
Champ: Leonard Dorin (CAN)
1. Raul Balbi (ARG)
2. Miguel Callist (PAN)
3. Stefano Zoff (ITA)
4. Julien Lorcy (FRA)
5. Angel Manfredy (USA)
6. Edson Xuxa Nascimento (BRA)
7. Alex Trujillo (PR)
8. Juan Lazcano (USA)
9. Juan Gomez-Trinidad (PR)
10. Rick Yoshimura (JAP)
11. Steve Johnston (USA)
12. Julio Diaz (USA)

SUPER FEATHERWEIGHTS
Super Champ: Acelino Freitas (BRA)
1. Lakva Sim (MON)
2. Yodsanan Nantapechai (THAI)
3. Joel Casamayor (CUB)
4. Lamont Peterson (USA)
5. Jorge Barrios (ARG)
6. Jongkwon Baek (KOR)
7. Phillip Ndou (SA)
8. Michael Gomez (GB)
9. Tontcho Tontchev (BUL)
10. Jose Miguel Cotto (PR)
11. Carlos Hernandez (SAL)
12. Silvano Usini (ITA)

FEATHERWEIGHTS
Champ: Derrick Gainer (USA)
1. Daniel Seda (PR)
2. Juan Manuel Marquez (MEX)
3. Naseem Hamed (GB)
4. Marco Antonio Barrera (MEX)
5. Johnny Tapia (USA)
6. Lewis Woods (US)
7. Victor Polo (COL)
8. Injin Chi (KOR)
9. Takashi Koshimoto (JAP)
10. Kengo Nagashima (JAP)
11. Cyril Thomas (FRA)
12. Robbie Peden (AUSTRL)

SUPER BANTAMWEIGHTS
Champ: Yoddamrong Sithyodthong (THAI)
1. Vacant
2. Salim Medjkoune (FRA)
3. Israel Vasquez (MEX)
4. Yober Ortega (VEN)
5. Paulie Ayala (USA)
6. Kozo Ishii (JAP)
7. Osamu Sato (JAP)
8. Johnny Armour (GB)
9. Michael Brodie (GB)
10. Enrique Sanchez (MEX)
11. Nadel Hussein (AUSTRL)
12. Oscar Larios (MEX)

BANTAMWEIGHTS
Champ: Eidy Moya (VEN)
1. Vacant
2. Leo Gamez (VEN)
3. Johnny Bredahl (DEN)
4. Toshiaki Nishioka (JAP)
5. Rafael Marquez (MEX)
6. Diego Morales (MEX)
7. Spend Abazi (DEN)
8. Adan Vargas (MEX)
9. Ratanachai Vorapin (THAI)
10. Genaro Garcia (USA)
11. Noriaki Naka (JAP)
12. Pete Frissina (USA)

SUPER FLYWEIGHTS
Champ: Celes Kobayashi (JAP)
1. Alexander Munoz (VEN)
2. Saen Sow Ploenchit (THAI)
3. Mbwana Matumla (TNZ)
4. Sornpichai Pisnurachank (THAI)
5. Hideki Todaka (JAP)
6. Kazuhiro Ryuko (JAP)
7. Adonis Rivas (NIC)
8. Jesus Rojas (VEN)
9. Katsushigo Kawashima (JAP)
10. Gerry Penalosa (PHIL)
11. Luis Bolanos (COL)
12. Dimitri Kirilov (RUS)

FLYWEIGHTS
Champ: Eric Morel (USA)
1. Denkaosaen Kaowitch (THAI)
2. Mzukisi Sikali (SA)
3. Isidro Garcia (MEX)
4. Alejandro Montiel (MEX)
5. Alexander Mahmutov (RUS)
6. Hiroshi Nakano (JAP)
7. Damaen Kelly (GB)
8. Lorenzo Parra (VEN)
9. Masaki Nakamuna (JAP)
10. Jose Carita Lopez (PR)
11. Hussein Hussein (AUSTRL)
12. Martin Castillo (MEX)

LIGHT FLYWEIGHTS
Champ: Rosendo Alvarez (NIC)
1. Vacant
2. Hidenobu Honda (JAP)
3. Yura Dima (MON)
4. Bebis Mendoza (COL)
5. Melchor Cob Castro (MEX)
6. Deeden Kengkarun (THAI)
7. Pichit C. Siriwat (THAI)
8. Eric Ortiz (MEX)
9. Masibulele Makepula (SA)
10. Saman Sorjaturong (THAI)
11. Edgar Velasquez (VEN)
12. Noel Tunacao (PHIL)

MINIMUMWEIGHTS
Champ: Keitaro Hoshino (JAP)
1. Noel Arambulet (VEN)
2. Chana Porpaoin (THAI)
3. Hiroshi Nakajima (JAP)
4. Joma Gamboa (PHIL)
5. Kim Ki Hwan (KOR)
6. Daniel Reyes (COL)
7. Jose Garcia (COL)
8. Khulile Makeba (SA)
9. Hiroshi Matsumoto (JAP)
10. Alex Sanchez (PR)
11. Songkram Porpaoin (THAI)
12. Jairo Arango (PAN)

WBC RATINGS
(Ratings as of March 2002)

HEAVYWEIGHTS
Champ: Lennox Lewis (GB)
1. Mike Tyson (USA)
2. Vitali Klitschko (UKR)
3. Hasim Rahman (USA)
4. Fres Oquendo (USA)
5. Evander Holyfield (USA)
6. Oliver McCall (USA)
7. Juan Carlos Gomez (CUB)
8. Chris Byrd (USA)
9. Jameel McCline (USA)
10. Danny Williams (GB)
11. Clifford Etienne (USA)
12. Larry Donald (USA)
13. Michael Moorer (USA)
14. Lance Whitaker (USA)
15. Kirk Johnson (CAN)
16. Lamon Brewster (USA)
17. Vaughn Bean (USA)
18. David Tua (NZ)
19. Ray Mercer (USA)
20. Monte Barrett (USA)
21. Brian Nielsen (DEN)
22. Luan Krasniqi (GER)
23. Henry Akinwande (GB)
24. Francois Botha (SA)
25. Sergei Lyakhovich (RUS)
26. Faruq Saleem (USA)
27. Shannon Briggs (USA)
28. Nicolay Valouev (RUS)
29. Joe Mesi (USA)
30. Peter Okhello (UGA)

CRUISERWEIGHTS
Champ: Vacant
1. Wayne Braithwaite (GUY)
2. Vincenzo Cantatore (ITA)
3. O'Neil Bell (USA)
4. Alexander Gurov (UKR)
5. Carlos Cruzat (CHI)
6. Louis Azille (DR)
7. Dale Brown (CAN)
8. Sebastiaan Rothmann (SA)
9. Bruce Scott (GB)
10. Virgil Hill (USA)
11. Turan Bagci (TUR)
12. Ramon Garbey (USA)
13. Ezra Sellers (USA)
14. Jason Robinson (USA)
15. Arthur Williams (USA)
16. Carl Thompson (GB)
17. Fabrice Tiozzo (FRA)
18. Rudiger May (GER)
19. Adolpho Washington (USA)
20. Luis Andres Pineda (PAN)
21. Alain Simon (FRA)
22. Pietro Aurino (ITA)
23. Roman Kovalchuk (UKR)
24. Mohamed Ben Guesmia (ALG)
25. Kenny Keene (USA)
26. Frederic Serrat (FRA)
27. Daniel Rowsell (AUSTRL)
28. Sione Asipeli (TON)
29. Ravea Springs (USA)
30. Krzysztof Wlodarczyk (POL)

LT. HEAVYWEIGHTS
Champ: Roy Jones (USA)
1. Clinton Woods (GB)
2. Yawe Davis (ITA)
3. Antonio Tarver (USA)
4. Mads Larsen (DEN)
5. Eric Harding (USA)
6. Julio Gonzalez (USA)
7. Michael Nunn (USA)
8. Reggie Johnson (USA)
9. Lou Del Valle (USA)
10. Jorge Castro (ARG)
11. Montell Griffin (USA)
12. Derrick Harmon (USA)
13. Glenn Kelly (AUSTRL)
14. Thomas Hansvoll (NOR)
15. Darren Corbett (GB)
16. Syd Vanderpool (CAN)
17. David Telesco (USA)
18. Glencoffe Johnson (USA)
19. Thomas Ulrich (GER)
20. Paul Briggs (AUSTRL)
21. Jabrial Jabrialov (RUS)
22. Kamel Amrane (FRA)
23. Mario Tonus (ITA)
24. Sergio Baez (ARG)
25. Silvio Branco (ITA)
26. Juan Nelongo (SPA)
27. Stipe Drews (CRO)
28. Tomasz Adamek (POL)
29. Arturo Rivera (MEX)
30. Orlando Rivera (PR)

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Champ: Eric Lucas (CAN)
1. Markus Beyer (GER)
2. David Starie (GB)
3. Thomas Tate (USA)
4. Danilo Haussler (GER)
5. Mikkel Kessler (DEN)
6. Antwun Echols (USA)
7. Glenn Catley (GB)
8. Dingaan Thobela (SA)
9. Omar Sheika (USA)
10. Jurgen Brahmer (GER)
11. Zafarou Ballogou (TOGO)
12. Henry Porras (CR)
13. Charles Brewer (USA)
14. Mehdi Sanoune (FRA)
15. Yoshinori Nishizawa (JAP)
16. Dan Batchelder (USA)
17. Robin Reid (GB)
18. Brian Magee (GB)
19. Rick Thornberry (AUSTRL)
20. Mario Veit (GER)
21. David Reid (USA)
22. Anthony Hanshaw (USA)
23. Omar Gonzalez (ARG)
24. James Lubwana (UGA)
25. Vinny Pazienza (USA)
26. Andrei Shkalikov (RUS)
27. Rudy Markussen (DEN)
28. Sidney Msutu (SA)
29. Jeff Lacy (USA)
30. Jean Paul Mendy (FRA)

MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Champ: Bernard Hopkins (USA)
1. Erland Betare (FRA)
2. Felix Trinidad (PR)
3. Cristian Sanavia (ITA)
4. Tito Mendoza (PAN)
5. Keith Holmes (USA)
6. Naotaka Hozumi (JAP)
7. Antonio Perugino (ITA)
8. Jerry Elliott (NIG)
9. Raymond Joval (HOL)
10. Travis Simms (USA)
11. Robert Allen (USA)
12. Carl Daniels (USA)
13. Kuvanych Toygonbayev (UZB)
14. Raul Marquez (USA)
15. Alejandro Berrio (COL)
16. Kevin Palmer (USA)
17. Morrade Hakkar (FRA)
18. Oure Evans (KEN)
19. Aaron Mitchell (USA)
20. Jorge Sendra (SPA)
21. Ryan Rhodes (GB)
22. Tokunbo Olajide (CAN)
23. Andras Galfi (HUN)
24. Lansana Djallo (BEL)
25. Cristian Zanabria (ARG)
26. Hector Velazco (ARG)
27. Delroy Leslie (GB)
28. Dwain Williams (USA)
29. Marlon Hayes (USA)
30. Stephan Trabant (GER)

SUPER WELTERWEIGHTS
Champ: Oscar De La Hoya (USA)
1. Roman Karmazin (RUS)
2. Francisco Castillejo (SPA)
3. Fitz Vanderpool (CAN)
4. Bronco McKart (USA)
5. Yory Boy Campas (MEX)
6. Kirino Garcia (MEX)
7. Nader Hamdan (AUSTR
8. Akira Ohigashi (JAP)
9. Mamadou Thiam (FRA)
10. Wayne Alexander (GB)
11. Angel Hernandez (MEX)
12. Richard Williams (GB)
13. Steve Roberts (GB)
14. Rhoshii Wells (USA)
15. Kassim Ouma (USA)
16. Kofi Jantuah (GHA)
17. Alex Bunema (USA)
18. J.C. Candelo (COL)
19. Christophe Canclaux (FR
20. Michael Rask (DEN)
21. Frank Olsen (DEN)
22. Alfred Ankamah (GHA)
23. Santiago Samaniego (PA
24. Sergei Dzindziruk (UKR
25. Adrian Stone (GB)
26. Elvis Guerrero (PAN)
27. Wilfredo Rivera (PR)
28. Anthony Farnell (GB)
29. Mihaly Kotai (HUN)
30. Gary Lockett (GB)

WELTERWEIGHTS
Champ: Vernon Forest (USA
1. Jose Luis Cruz (MEX)
2. Carlos Baldomir (ARG)
3. Shane Mosley (USA)
4. Thomas Damgaard (DEN
5. Danny Perez (USA)
6. Michele Piccirillo (ITA)
7. Hercules Kyvelos (CAN)
8. Julian Holland (AUSTRL
9. Cory Spinks (USA)
10. Christian Bladt (DEN)
11. Manuel Gomez (MEX)
12. Rev Santillan (PHIL)
13. Jawaid Khaliq (GB)
14. Michele Orlando (ITA)
15. Rafael Pineda (COL)
16. Alessandro Duran (ITA)
17. Alexander Vetoux (UKR
18. Michel Trabant (GER)
19. Antonio Diaz (MEX)
20. Sergio Martinez (ARG)
21. Hassan Al (DEN)
22. Chantel Stanciel (USA)
23. Frederic Klose (FRA)
24. Golden Johnson (USA)
25. Juan Carlos Rubio (MEX
26. Jeffrey Hill (USA)
27. Luther Smith (USA)
28. Charles Whitaker (CAY)
29. Jose Rivera (USA)
30. Neil Sinclair (GB)

SUPER LIGHTWEIGHTS
Champ: Kostya Tszyu (AUST
1. Gianluca Branco (ITA)
2. Hector Camacho Jr. (PR)
3. Arturo Gatti (CAN)
4. Ricky Hatton (GB)
5. Eamonn Magee (GB)
6. Ben Tackie (GHA)
7. James Leija (USA)
8. Oktay Urkal (TUR)
9. Gabriel Mapuoka (FRA)
10. Masakazu Satake (JAP)
11. Wilfredo Vilches (ARG)
12. Sharmba Mitchell (USA)
13. Terronn Millett (USA)
14. Mikhail Krivolapov (RUS
15. Miguel Cotto (PR)
16. Francisco Bojado (MEX)
17. Hiroyuki Sakamoto (JAP
18. Soulemane M'Baye (FRA
19. Vivian Harris (USA)
20. Omar Weis (ARG)
21. Junior Witter (GB)
22. Diobelys Hurtado (CUB
23. Khalid Rahilou (FRA)
24. Pablo Sarmiento (ARG)
25. Vince Phillips (USA)
26. Giuseppe Lauri (ITA)

27. Juan Mosquera (PAN)
28. Ricardo Williams (USA)
29. Ivan Kirpa (RUS)
30. Fabrice Colombel (FRA)

LIGHTWEIGHTS
Champ: Jose Luis Castillo (MEX)
1. Steve Johnston (USA)
2. Juan Lazcano (USA)
3. Stefano Zoff (ITA)
4. Alex Trujillo (PR)
5. Julio Diaz (USA)
6. Carlos Gerena (PR)
7. Raul Balbi (ARG)
8. Julien Lorcy (FRA)
9. Victoriano Damian Sosa (DR)
10. Colin Dunne (GB)
11. Diego Gimenez (ARG)
12. Sandro Casamonica (ITA)
13. Bobby Vanzie (GB)
14. Dennis Laurente (PHIL)
15. Aldo Rios (ARG)
16. Zinole Mpusula (SA)
17. Lawrence Ngobeni (SA)
18. Miguel Callist (PAN)
19. Julian Wheeler (USA)
20. Efren Hinojosa (MEX)
21. Cesar Bazan (MEX)
22. Omar Bernal (MEX)
23. Gary Balletto (USA)
24. Michael Clark (USA)
25. Michele Delli Paoli (ITA)
26. Steve Murray (GB)
27. Justo Sencion (USA)
28. Wilmer Gomez (PAN)
29. Brian Adams (USA)
30. Sayan Sanchat (RUS)

SUPER FEATHERWEIGHTS
Champ: Floyd Mayweather (USA)
1. Srimongkol Singmanassuk (THAI)
2. Kengo Nagashima (JAP)
3. Jesus Chavez (USA)
4. Tiger Ari (PHIL)
5. Randy Suico (PHIL)
6. Alejandro Gonzalez (MEX)
7. Laiva Sim (MON)
8. Joel Casamayor (CUB)
9. Philip Ndou (SA)
10. Carlos Hernandez (EL SALV)
11. Jorge Barrios (ARG)
12. Affif Djelti (FRA)
13. Pedro Miranda (SPA)
14. Ernesto Zepeda (MEX)
15. Tonicho Tontchev (BUL)
16. Lamont Pearson (USA)
17. Fernando Trejo (MEX)
18. Jorge Paez (MEX)
19. Michael Gomez (GB)
20. Boris Sinitsin (RUS)
21. Claudio Martinet (ARG)
22. Mzonke Fana (SA)
23. Javier Alvarez (ARG)
24. Alex Arthur (GB)
25. Silvano Usini (ITA)
26. Yobsanan Nanthachai (THAI)
27. Miguel Casillas (MEX)
28. Javier Jauregui (MEX)
29. Hoga Min (KOR)
30. David Santos (USA)

FEATHERWEIGHTS
Champ: Erik Morales (MEX)
1. Injin Chi (KOR)
2. Juan Manuel Marquez (MEX)
3. Michael Brodie (GB)
4. Naseem Hamed (GB)
5. Manuel Calvo (SPA)
6. Robbie Peden (AUSTRL)
7. Anthony Tshehla (SA)
8. Takashi Koshimoto (JAP)
9. Scott Harrison (GB)
10. Guty Espadas (MEX)
11. Luis Fuentes (MEX)
12. Istvan Kovacs (HUN)
13. Junior Jones (USA)
14. Prather Yanagida (JAP)
15. William Abelyan (USA)
16. Hector Acero-Sanchez (DR)
17. John Michael Johnson (USA)
18. Fernando Velardez (MEX)
19. Daniel Seda (PR)
20. Orlando Soto (PAN)
21. Frankie Toledo (USA)
22. Augie Sanchez (USA)
23. Wilson Alcorro (COL)
24. Cristobal Cruz (MEX)
25. Zahir Raheem (USA)
26. Pastor Maurin (ARG)
27. Cyril Thomas (FRA)
28. Eiichi Sugama (JAP)
29. Daniel Attah (NIG)
30. Toshikage Kimura (JAP)

SUPER BANTAMWEIGHTS
Champ: Willie Jorrin (USA)
1. Israel Vazquez (MEX)
2. Osamu Sato (JAP)
3. Oscar Larios (MEX)
4. Paulie Ayala (USA)
5. Johnny Tapia (USA)
6. Salim Medjkoune (FRA)
7. Kiattisak Chocchoi (THAI)
8. Nadel Hussein (AUSTRL)
9. Youngjin Cho (KOR)
10. Arnel Barotillo (AUSTRL)
11. Lehlo Ledwaba (SA)
12. Wayne McCullough (IRE)
13. Kozo Ishii (JAP)
14. Junichi Watanabe (JAP)
15. Bones Adams (USA)
16. Akihiro Kanai (JAP)
17. Fabio Oliva (ARG)
18. Manabu Fukushima (JAP)
19. Emmanuel Lucero (USA)
20. Celestino Caballero (PAN)
21. Yober Ortega (VEN)
22. Wethya Singwangcha (THAI)
23. Joan Guzman (DR)
24. Turcay Kaya (FRA)
25. Angel Chacon (PR)
26. Norihisa Tomimoto (JAP)
27. Mahyar Monshipour (FRA)
28. Jose Luis Valbuena (VEN)
29. Masakazu Sugawara (JAP)
30. Hugo Soto (ARG)

BANTAMWEIGHTS
Champ: Veerapol Sahaprom (THAI)
1. Toshiaki Nishioka (JAP)
2. Genaro Garcia (USA)
3. Rafael Marquez (MEX)
4. Johnny Bredahl (DEN)
5. Diego Morales (MEX)
6. Jess Maca (PHIL)
7. Noel Wilders (GB)
8. Abner Cordero (PHIL)
9. Cruz Carbajal (MEX)
10. Spend Abazi (DEN)
11. Ricardo Vargas (MEX)
12. David Guerault (FRA)
13. Mark Johnson (USA)
14. Julio Zarate (MEX)
15. Heriberto Ruiz (MEX)
16. Fabien Guillerme (FRA)
17. Jhonny Gonzalez (MEX)
18. Nobuaki Naka (JAP)
19. Francisco Mateos (MEX)
20. Julio Coronel (COL)
21. Debind Thapa (NEP)
22. Lester Fuentes (EL SALV)
23. Nicky Booth (GB)
24. Pete Frissina (USA)
25. Roger Gonzalez (USA)
26. Ryuichi Minoriyama (JAP)
27. Fasan 3K-Battery (THAI)
28. Julio Cesar Medina (ARG)
29. Frankie DeMilo (SWE)
30. Hyok Jun Kim (KOR)

SUPER FLYWEIGHTS
Champ: Masanori Tokuyama (JAP)
1. Dimitri Kirilov (RUS)
2. Gerry Penalosa (PHIL)
3. Martin Castillo (MEX)
4. Reynaldo Hurtado (COL)
5. Kazuhiro Ryuko (JAP)
6. Luis Bolanos (COL)
7. Saen Sow Ploenchit (THAI)
8. Shingo Sasaki (JAP)
9. Jose Beranza (MEX)
10. Katsushige Kawashima (JAP)
11. Malcolm Tunacao (PHIL)
12. Erick Lopez (MEX)
13. Medgoen Singsurat (THAI)
14. Eiji Kojima (JAP)
15. Mauricio Pastrana (COL)
16. Takuya Kiya (JAP)
17. Oscar Andrade (MEX)
18. Luis Perez (NIC)
19. Sot Sot Veeraphol (THAI)
20. Alexander Knight (RUS)
21. Joel Avila (PHIL)
22. Ricardo Cordoba (PAN)
23. Eric Barcelona (PHIL)
24. Tomas Rojas (MEX)
25. Trinidad Mendoza (MEX)
26. Mbwana Matumla (TAN)
27. Vernie Torres (USA)
28. Hiroaki Murakoshi (JAP)
29. Roberto Bonilla (NIC)
30. Tat Torres (MEX)

FLYWEIGHTS
Champ: Pongsaklek Wonjongkam (THAI)
1. Alexander Mahmutov (RUS)
2. Hidenobu Honda (JAP)
3. Hiroshi Nakano (JAP)
4. Wandee Chor Chareon (THAI)
5. Hussein Hussein (AUSTRL)
6. Randy Mangubat (PHIL)
7. Masaki Nakamuna (JAP)
8. Hawk Makepula (SA)
9. Takefumi Sakata (JAP)
10. Everardo Morales (MEX)
11. Alejandro Montiel (MEX)
12. Hayato Asai (JAP)
13. Damaen Kelly (GB)
14. Daisuke Naito (JAP)
15. Luis Maldonado (MEX)
16. Jair Jimenez (COL)
17. Omar Narvaez (ARG)
18. Evaristo Primero (MEX)
19. Lorenzo Parra (VEN)
20. Peter Culshaw (GB)
21. Ivan Hernandez (MEX)
22. Gilberto Keb-Baas (MEX)
23. Koji Koyama (JAP)
24. Carlos Bouchan (MEX)
25. Andrea Sarritzu (ITA)
26. Alejandro Moreno (MEX)
28. Gabula Vabaza (SA)
29. Mimoun Chent (FRA)
30. Karim Quibir (SPA)

LIGHT FLYWEIGHTS
Champ: Yosam Choi (KOR)
1. Melchor Cob Castro (MEX)
2. Juanito Rubillar (PHIL)
3. Jesus Martinez (MEX)
4. Agustin Luna (MEX)
5. Saman Sorjaturong (THAI)
6. Bebis Mendoza (COL)
7. Eric Ortiz (MEX)
8. Vuyisile Bebe (SA)
9. Tatsuo Hayashida (JAP)
10. John Molina (COL)
11. Pilkoo Kang (KOR)
12. Victor Burgos (MEX)
13. Rodrigo Garcia (MEX)
14. Keisuke Yokoyama (JAP)
15. Rafael Lozano (SPA)
16. Joma Gamboa (PHIL)
17. Celso Danggud (PHIL)
18. Shingo Yamaguchi (JAP)
19. Rolly Lunas (PHIL)
20. Noboyuki Enomoto (JAP)
21. Takayuki Korogi (JAP)
22. Jinho Kim (KOR)
23. Flash Villacura (PHIL)
24. Ernesto Castro (NIC)
25. Omar Nino (MEX)
26. Manuel Vargas (MEX)
27. Minsoo Jang (KOR)
28. Steve Msimango (SA)
29. Deende Kengkarun (THAI)
30. Samransak Singmanassak (THAI)

STRAWWEIGHTS
Champ: Jose Antonio Aguirre (MEX)
1. Khulile Makeba (SA)
2. Ernesto Rubillar (PHIL)
3. Isaac Bustos (MEX)
4. Hiroshi Nakajima (JAP)
5. Noel Tunacao (PHIL)
6. Yasuo Tokimitsu (JAP)
7. Heriberto Gijon (PHIL)
8. Noel Arambulet (VEN)
9. Hiroshi Matsumoto (JAP)
10. Chana Porpaoin (THAI)
11. Makoto Suzuki (JAP)
12. Juan Palacios (NIC)
13. Satoshi Kogumasaka (JAP)
14. Rodel Mayol (PHIL)
15. Jairo Arango (PAN)
16. Omar Soto (MEX)
17. Hiroyuki Abe (JAP)
18. Manny Melchor (PHIL)
19. Fernando Luna (MEX)
20. Valentin Leon (MEX)
21. Wele Maqolo (SA)
22. Jaewon Kim (KOR)
23. Sizwe Sinyabi (SA)
24. Juan Centeno (NIC)
25. Eagle Okuda (JAP)
26. Miguel Barrera (MEX)
27. Daisuke Iida (JAP)
28. Satikalek O. Eakaria (THAI)
29. Lorenzo Trejo (MEX)
30. Mawanda Sineko (SA)

IBF RATINGS
(Ratings as of March 2002)

HEAVYWEIGHTS
Champ: Lennox Lewis (GB)
1. Chris Byrd (USA)
2. Vacant
3. Fres Oquendo (USA)
4. Hasim Rahman (USA)
5. Kirk Johnson (CAN)
6. Jameel McCline (USA)
7. Ray Mercer (USA)
8. Monte Barrett (USA)
9. David Tua (NZ)
10. Oliver McCall (USA)
11. Lance Whitaker (USA)
12. Clifford Etienne (USA)

CRUISERWEIGHTS
Champ: Vassiliy Jirov (KAZ)
1. Vacant
2. Vacant
3. O'Neil Bell (USA)
4. Alexander Gurov (UKR)
5. James Toney (USA)
6. Wayne Braithwaite (GUY)
7. Arthur Williams (USA)
8. Fabrice Tiozzo (FRA)
9. Ezra Sellers (USA)
10. Jorge Castro (ARG)
11. Louis Azille (DR)
12. Ramon Garbey (USA)

LT. HEAVYWEIGHTS
Champ: Roy Jones (USA)
1. Antonio Tarver (USA)
2. Vacant
3. Eric Harding (USA)
4. David Telesco (USA)
5. Glencoffe Johnson (JA)
6. Reggie Johnson (USA)
7. Omar Kelly (AUSTRL)
8. Yawe Davis (ITA)
9. Montell Griffin (USA)
10. Julio Gonzalez (USA)
11. Derrick Harmon (USA)
12. Lester Jacobs (ENG)

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Champ: Sven Ottke (GER)
1. Thomas Tate (USA)
2. Vacant
3. Antwun Echols (USA)
4. Omar Sheika (USA)
5. David Starie (GB)
6. Mads Larsen (DEN)
7. Markus Beyer (GER)
8. Danilo Haussler (GER)
9. Sam Hill (USA)
10. Richard Grant (USA)
11. Fernando Zuniga (USA)
12. Andrei Shkalikov (RUS)

MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Champ: Bernard Hopkins (USA)
1. Vacant
2. Felix Trinidad (PR)
3. Tito Mendoza (PAN)
4. Erland Betare (FRA)
5. Robert Allen (USA)
6. Keith Holmes (USA)
7. Carl Daniels (USA)
8. Francisco Castillejo (SPA)
9. Cristian Sanavia (ITA)
10. Harry Simon (NAM)
11. Raymond Joval (HOL)
12. Howard Eastman (GB)

JR. MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Champ: Winky Wright (USA)
1. Bronco McKart (USA)
2. Vacant
3. Nader Hamdan (AUSTRL)
4. Kirino Garcia (MEX)
5. Angel Hernandez (USA)
6. Alex Bunema (USA)
7. Roman Karmazin (RUS)
8. J.C. Candelo (COL)
9. Mamadou Thiam (FRA)
10. Kassim Ouma (USA)
11. Jason Papillion (USA)
12. Emil Baku (USA)

WELTERWEIGHTS
Champ: Vacant
1. Michele Piccirillo (ITA)
2. Cory Spinks (USA)
3. Shane Mosley (USA)
4. Thomas Damgaard (DEN)
5. Hercules Kyvelos (CAN)
6. Danny Perez (USA)
7. Jose Rivera (USA)
8. Rafael Pineda (COL)
9. Julian Holland (AUSTRL)
10. Luther Smith (USA)
11. Santiago Samaniego (PAN)
12. Hector Quiroz (MEX)

JR. WELTERWEIGHTS
Champ: Kostya Tszyu (AUSTRL)
1. Ben Tackie (GHA)
2. Vacant
3. Arturo Gatti (USA)
4. Oktay Urkal (TUR)
5. Carlos Vilches (ARG)
6. James Leija (USA)
7. Micky Ward (USA)
8. Teddy Reid (JAM)
9. Ray Oliveira (USA)
10. Sharmba Mitchell (USA)
11. Terronn Millett (USA)
12. Hector Camacho Jr. (USA)

LIGHTWEIGHTS
Champ: Paul Spadafora (USA)
1. Vacant
2. Vacant
3. Juan Lazcano (USA)
4. Victoriano Sosa (DR)
5. Julio Diaz (USA)
6. Edson Xuxa Nascimento (BRA)
7. Angel Manfredy (USA)
8. Steve Johnston (USA)
9. Julian Wheeler (USA)
10. Leavander Johnson (USA)
11. Dennis Holbaek (DEN)
12. Raul Balbi (ARG)

JR. LIGHTWEIGHTS
Champ: Steve Forbes (USA)
1. Lamont Pearson (USA)
2. David Santos (USA)
3. Ernesto Zepeda (MEX)
4. Phillip Ndou (SA)
5. Carlos Hernandez (USA)
6. Alejandro Gonzalez (MEX)
7. Luis Lizarraga (USA)
8. Jesus Chavez (USA)
9. Juan Arias (USA)
10. Daniel Attah (NIG)
11. Brian Adams (USA)
12. Nate Campbell (USA)

FEATHERWEIGHTS
Champ: Manuel Medina (MEX)
1. Juan Manuel Marquez (MEX)
2. Vacant
3. Oscar Larios (MEX)
4. Frankie Toledo (USA)
5. John Michael Johnson (USA)
6. Robbie Peden (AUSTRL)
7. Johnny Tapia (USA)
8. Victor Polo (COL)
9. Michael Brodie (ENG)
10. Naseem Hamed (ENG)
11. David Toledo (USA)
12. Augie Sanchez (USA)

JR. FEATHERWEIGHTS
Champ: Manny Pacquaio (PHIL)
1. Vacant
2. Vacant
3. Jose Luis Valbuena (ARG)
4. F. Rakkiatkyni (INDO)
5. Salim Medjkoune (FRA)
6. Enrique Sanchez (MEX)
7. Fernando Velardez (USA)
8. Bones Adams (USA)
9. Vladyslav Antonov (RUS)
10. Nadel Hussein (AUSTRL)
11. Arnel Barotillo (AUSTRL)
12. Wayne McCullough (IRE)

BANTAMWEIGHTS
Champ: Tim Austin (USA)
1. Rafael Marquez (MEX)
2. Vacant
3. Johnny Bredahl (DEN)
4. Pete Frissina (USA)
5. Diego Morales (MEX)
6. Adan Vargas (MEX)
7. Genaro Garcia (MEX)
8. Mark Johnson (USA)
9. Roger Gonzalez (USA)
10. Ratanachai Vorapin (THAI)
11. Toshiaki Nakajima (JAP)
12. Spend Abazi (DEN)

JR. BANTAMWEIGHTS
Champ: Felix Machado (VEN)
1. Vacant
2. Vacant
3. Martin Castillo (MEX)
4. Saen Sor Ploenchit (THAI)
5. Mauricio Pastrana (COL)
6. Adonis Rivas (NIC)
7. Luis Bolano (COL)
8. Ricardo Vargas (USA)
9. Samson 3K-Battery (THAI)
10. Julio Coronel (COL)
11. Gerry Penalosa (PHIL)
12. Jesus Rojas (VEN)

FLYWEIGHTS
Champ: Irene Pacheco (COL)
1. Vacant
2. Vacant
3. Alejandro Montiel (MEX)
4. Alexander Mahmutov (RUS)
5. Hussein Hussein (LEB)
6. David Guerault (FRA)
7. Damaen Kelly (GB)
8. Mike Trejo (USA)
9. Wandee Chareon (THAI)
10. Randy Mangubat (PHIL)
11. Angel Priolo (COL)
12. Jason Booth (GB)

JR. FLYWEIGHTS
Champ: Ricardo Lopez (MEX)
1. Vacant
2. Vacant
3. Melchor Cob Castro (MEX)
4. Jose Burgos (MEX)
5. Noel Tunacao (PHIL)
6. Saman Sorjaturong (THAI)
7. Bebis Mendoza (COL)
8. Jorge Arce (MEX)
9. Juan Keb Baas (MEX)
10. Fahlan Sakreerin (THAI)
11. Eric Ortiz (MEX)
12. Dimitri Kirilov (RUS)

MINI FLYWEIGHTS
Champ: Roberto Leyva (MEX)
1. Vacant
2. Miguel Barrera (MEX)
3. Daniel Reyes (COL)
4. Hiroshi Matsumoto (JAP)
5. Ernesto Rubillar (PHIL)
6. Noel Arambulet (VEN)
7. Hiroshi Nakajima (JAP)
8. Joma Gamboa (PHIL)
9. Keitaro Hoshino (JAP)
10. Muhammad Rachman (INDO)
11. Eriberto Gejon (PHIL)
12. Isaac Bustos (MEX)

CLASSIC

From THE RING, December 1935

UP THE LADDER FOR MAX DOWN THE CHUTE FOR MAX

By Nat Fleischer

(Editor's Note: This is a condensed version.)

The Joe Louis-Max Baer fight is a matter of ring history. The tumult and the furor have died down. Baer has gone into a wise retirement, and Louis looks for new worlds to conquer. He probably will fight Walter Neusel in New York before the snow flies, then will meet Max Schmeling in this country next June, followed by a world heavyweight championship fight, staged under the direction of Mike Jacobs, with the Negro and Jimmy Braddock as the principals.

With Baer badly and fairly beaten, and out of consideration in the future plans of any and all promoters, what I say here is not to be regarded as an excuse. It is a true story.

Baer went into the ring unable to defend himself properly. I said before the fight and I repeat it now: Baer went into action against Louis with his right thumb gone. His left knuckle, hurt before the Braddock fight, was all gone, reports to the contrary for ballyhoo purposes notwithstanding.

His thumb was sprained several weeks before he began active preparation for Louis and the fact was kept a secret from the promoters and the press.

That's why, when the contracts were signed, Baer insisted on the Thomas type glove, a California glove that carried a good thumb protection in it. The type was acceptable to Louis, but the boxing commission was not consulted and that's what brought about the arguments when, on the day of the weigh-in, Baer learned that the official New York State gloves, the Everlast gloves, were to be used.

When Baer threatened to call off the fight then and there, and hop on the first train west, he meant business. He was not bluffing. He was looking for an out and would have gone through with his threat.

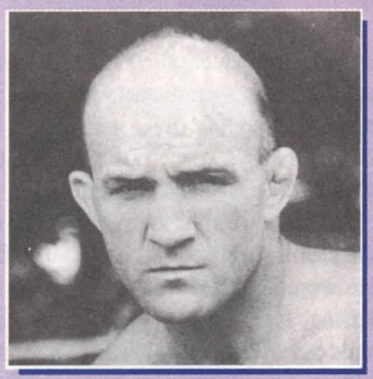
With the thumb gone, Baer could not use his right to ward off Louis' lefts. That is also why Jack Dempsey was called into the picture at the last minute—to bolster Baer's morale. With the thumb gone, Baer could not hit with the knuckle side of his right hand. That overhand right with which Baer caught Louis in the first and made Louis' knees buckle together momentarily was struck with the side of the fist. What might have happened had Baer hit with the fist proper is problematical. The blow hurt Louis—that much Louis himself admitted after the fight.

All of this information is authentic, and is certainly not given as an alibi, for I declared that Baer would be stopped. In fact, there wasn't and still isn't a more ardent Louis supporter, excepting possibly Bill Corum of the *New York Evening Journal*, than I. I was among the first in the East to sing the praises of Louis, and I shall continue to do just that until such time as I'm convinced that a better man has appeared on the fistic horizon.

When Baer worked with Abie Feldman, and knocked him down, Baer aggravated the condition of the thumb, and when he entered the ring, he had to get a shot of cocaine to deaden the pain. That's no alibi, because Baer knew his condition and it was just his misfortune. But even in the finest physical condition, Baer would have received the same dose from Louis, although possibly he would have fared a little better in meting out punishment. It is my contention that even with the thumb and left knuckle right, Baer still would have been beaten badly, but at least might have put up a better fight instead of being scared out of his wits.

The heavyweight match between undefeated prospect Joe Louis (above) and former champ Max Baer (right) was supposed to be a test for the streaking Louis. But "The Brown Bomber" easily handled Baer in four rounds to put himself in line for a shot at reigning champion Jimmy Braddock.

THE RING RATINGS, December 1935



Marcel Thil

HEAVYWEIGHTS
World Champ: Jimmy Braddock
1. Joe Louis
2. Max Schmeling
3. Ford Smith
4. Walter Neusel
5. Buddy Baer
6. Tom Loughran
7. Eddie Maher
8. Hank Hankinson
9. Charley Retzlaff
10. Al Ettore

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS
World Champ: Bob Olin
1. Al McCoy
2. Maxey Rosenbloom
3. John Henry Lewis
4. Tony Shucco
5. Ambrose Palmer
6. Joe Knight
7. Adolf Heuser
8. Al Gainer
9. Ray Actis
10. Fred Lenhart

MIDDLEWEIGHTS
World Champ: Marcel Thil
1. Freddy Steele
2. Lou Brouillard
3. Paul Pirrone
4. Babe Risko
5. Teddy Yarosz
6. Frank Battaglia
7. Erich Seelig
8. Oscar Rankins
9. Ken Overlin
10. Fred Apostoli

WELTERWEIGHTS
World Champ: Barney Ross
1. Jimmy McLarnin
2. Bep Van Klaveren
3. Kid Azteca
4. Eddie Kid Wolf
5. Jack Carroll
6. Ceferino Garcia
7. Cleto Locatelli
8. Harry Dublinsky
9. Jimmy Leto
10. Joe Bernal

LIGHTWEIGHTS
World Champ: Tony Canzoneri
1. Lou Ambers
2. Wesley Ramey
3. Frankie Klick
4. Tiger Humery
5. Al Roth
6. Joe Ghnouly
7. Leo Rodak
8. Lew Massey
9. Joey Ferrando
10. Charley Gomer

FEATHERWEIGHTS
World Champ: Freddy Miller
1. Maurice Holtzer
2. Henry Armstrong
3. Young Casanova
4. Baby Arizmendi
5. Petey Sarron
6. Mike Belloise
7. Mexican Joe Rivers
8. Fillo Echeverria
9. Johnny Pena
10. Frankie Covelli

BANTAMWEIGHTS
World Champ: Balcasar Sanchelli
1. Louis Salica
2. Sixto Escobar
3. Midget Wolgast
4. Bobby Leyvas
5. Pablo Dano
6. Frankie Castillo
7. Indian Quintana
8. Speedy Dado
9. Little Pancho
10. Young Tommy

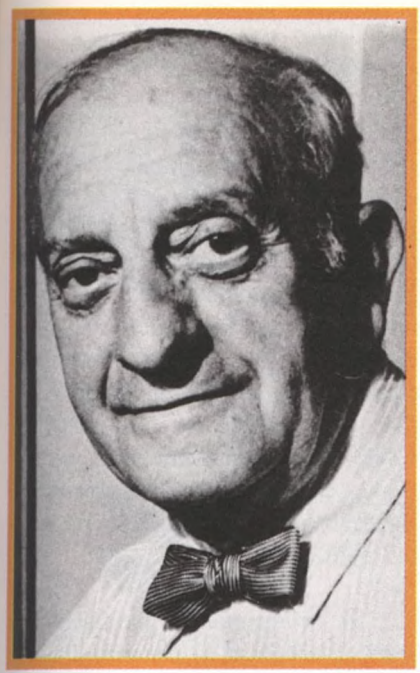
FLYWEIGHTS
World Champ: Vacant
1. Benny Lynch
2. Small Montana
3. Jackie Brown
4. Joe Mendiola
5. Maurice Huguenin
6. Valentin Anglemann
7. Jim Campbell
8. Syd Parker
9. Phil Milligan
10. Bobby Magee

***

The eyes of the fistic world for two months were focused on the ebony-skinned young Bomber of Detroit and California's ring comedian. It was expected that when their million-dollar shindig at the Yankee Stadium was over, things pugilistic would return to normal. But dead-pan, sleepy-eyed Louis, whose phenomenal rise has not been matched in boxing history, made such a great job out of the opportunity given him that he proved his right to a championship bout with Jim Braddock. Louis remains the one big topic of discussion in every part of the world where boxing fans gather, and will continue to do so even during the height of the football season.

Why? Because Johnny Public's imagination has been fired. What would Joe Louis have done to John L. Sullivan? How would he have fared against the mighty Bob Fitzsimmons? Would the cleverness of the sharp-shooting Jim Corbett have offset the hitting powers of the conqueror of Max Baer, eventually to have outpointed this new ring marvel? Would the powerful fists of Jack Dempsey and his tiger-like fighting have checked the fistic wonder of the age? Would the shifty Jack Johnson, with his feinting prowess and his powerful lunges, have tied Louis into knots as he did other great ring men to pound out a victory?

These and other queries, mighty interesting from the point of view of comparison of pugilistic immortals with the latest executioner of the white race's outstanding fighters, have brought back new life,



Nat Fleischer, founder and editor of THE RING, always thought highly of Louis and praised him in print, which caused some to call him a "traitor" to his own race. Yet Fleischer continued to support Louis and was among the first to predict the Detroit slugger's greatness.

new interest, and the million-dollar gate to boxing, and it is my prediction that there will be no letup just so long as Joe Louis is willing to continue to show in public. Fame and fortune are his now, and though his rise has been meteoric, I predict still further advancement for him, with his ultimate goal, the heavyweight championship, his whenever he can get the titleholder into the ring with him.

***

Speaking of predictions, by way of passing, without too much ego, let me say that ever since I saw Joe Louis in action in Detroit, I have harped on his greatness in my RING magazine.

And yet his trainer, Jack Blackburn, to whom must be given all the credit for having brought Louis up from a $50 fighter a year-and-a-half ago to the million-dollar scrapper, is not satisfied that Louis has reached the point where he can be called the "perfect fighting machine."

If "The Brown Bomber" is not that now, then I wonder what else Louis must do to receive that appellation. According to Blackburn, when Louis has had two more fights, then he will have reached that stage and he'll be able to call his round on an opponent almost to the second. Name another fighter in all American ring history who has duplicated Louis' feat over a similar stretch of time. There is none.

I was in Louis' dressing room following his one-sided victory over Baer, and for the first time in my many visits to Louis did I see him give anything that seemed to approach symptoms of elation, and that was brought about by the praise of one of the world's best little fighters of all-time. Barney Ross leaned over and said:

"Congratulations, Joe, I have seen tonight the greatest fighter I ever saw."

That, coming from Ross, an idol in another class, was indeed a compliment worthwhile, and what Ross expressed was the sentiment of thousands of other unbiased fight fans, including yours truly. As for me, I have expressed it so often that I have been accused by many of my followers of disloyalty to the white race.

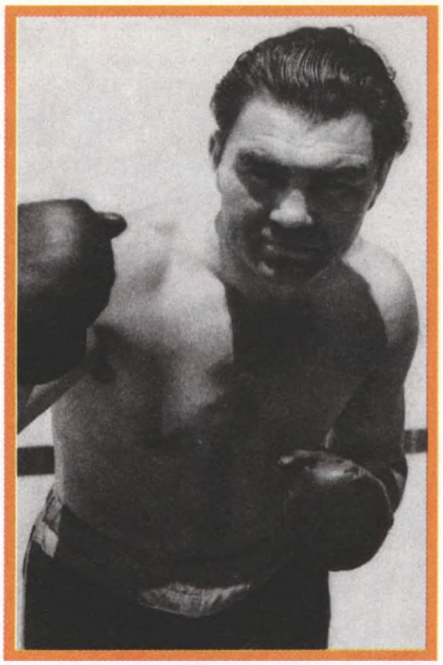
But to those I say that the brotherhood of man owes no loyalty to any particular race and true sportsmanship calls beyond loyalty. That multitude of 90,000 who gave Louis a lusty cheer as his hand was raised in token of victory exemplified the true meaning of loyalty to the great sport of boxing, and just so long as Baer's conqueror continues to do his fighting in the roped square, and to give his best efforts at all times, the profession in which he has cast his lot will have no reason to regret his entry.

***

The Louis-Baer fight is over. The knockout of Baer puts an end to another comeback attempt of a former champion. The old adage, "they can't come back," continues to hold true. As Baer so aptly said in an interview credited to him with my friend, Eddie Geiger, sports editor of *The Chicago American*:

"You can't burn the candle on both ends and hope to triumph over life's battles. You can't stay out half the night, drinking, smoking, and fighting nature. It's fun while you are living in that whirl, but nature exacts her toll, and you pay the price.

"I am satisfied that had I lived like Dempsey, Benny Leonard, or Gene Tunney, I would have been able to carry on, and instead of the hisses and the hooting that greeted me as I feebly walked out of the ring to my dressing room, there would have been cheers and applause. One day a champion, the next a forgotten man—that's me right now.



Max Schmeling was waiting in the wings after Louis disposed of Baer. Fleischer was among those who thought Schmeling would have had a better chance to beat Louis than Baer did. The German proved him right, stopping Louis the following year in 12 rounds.

"I thought I could go on forever, and when my friends begged me to quit and to attend strictly to the business of fighting while I was still in my prime, I just laughed. I sneered and snickered at their advice, and I even found fault with the scribes whose writings were responsible for my big money making. I simply misunderstood them—my real friends—and paid attention to the flatterers.

"Wine, women, and song, cigarettes and the lack of sleep put me where I am tonight, not Joe Louis. I was susceptible to flattery, and I have paid for my playboy folly. Nightlife doesn't pay if you want to be an athlete, and I want to warn those who are following in my footsteps to take heed," concluded Baer.

Never have I known a boxer to toss away success and its accompanying financial rewards as did Baer. He had everything—physically—but mentally he lacked the willpower and the foresight to keep him in line. And thus has passed from the picture "Livermore Max, California's Great Lover."

***

And what now? In the parade of heavyweights who appeared on the Baer-Louis card, there were some good prospects, but not a man who could reckon with Louis

Baer's life of leisure may have spelled his doom even before he stepped into the ring with Louis. "You can't burn the candle on both ends and hope to triumph over life's battles," Baer explained after the fight. "You can't stay out half the night, drinking, smoking, and fighting nature. It's fun while you are living in that whirl, but nature exacts her toll and you pay the price."

either now or in the near future. Since the newcomers do not measure up to the mark as Louis opponents, promoter Jacobs finds it necessary, in order to continue Louis' activity in the big money class, to fall back on veterans, and in that class there are only two available who could draw the dough and continue to keep Jacobs in the spotlight as the million-dollar promoter.

On the one hand, Jacobs has Max Schmeling, former world heavyweight titleholder, whose recent triumphs over Steve Hamas, Walter Neusel, and Paulino Uzcudun stamp him as a worthy rival for "The Detroit Bomber." It is my opinion that Schmeling, whose first trip to this country was engineered by me as agent for Tex Rickard, will draw as much or possibly more than did Max Baer with Louis. Why? Because Schmeling has a colorful background, is a good boxer, and the best hitter among the heavyweights now before the public, excepting Louis. Schmeling's style would enable the spectators to see a far more thrilling battle with Louis than any other opponent who might be selected for the Negro.

I am not among those who think that Schmeling can take Louis, but I am among those who give Schmeling a better chance than Baer was given by me. I think such a bout would net a million and would excite the interest of Johnny Public even more than did the recent mill at the Yankee Stadium. I also go on record now with the prediction that, regardless of Schmeling's hitting powers, he'll be knocked out or stopped within five rounds.

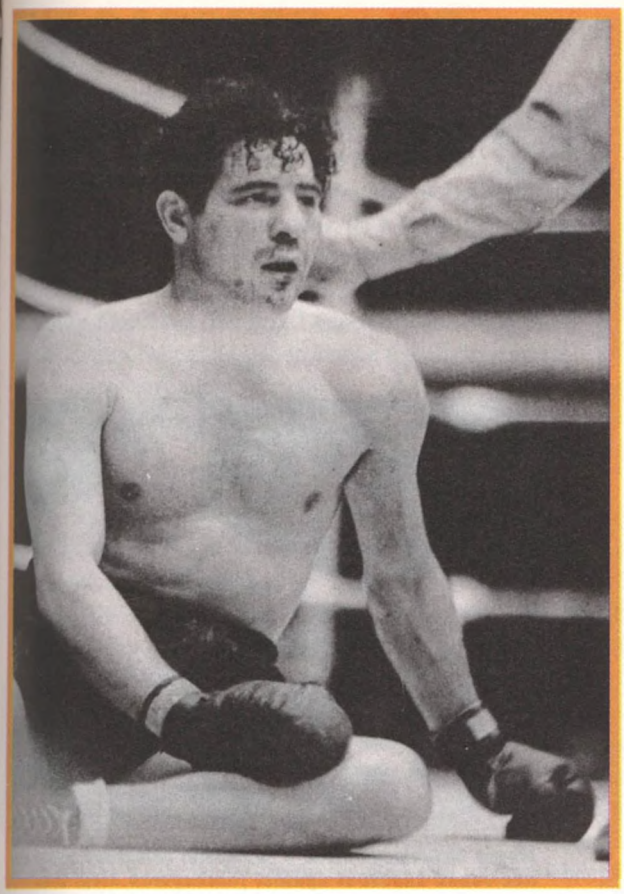
Under the plans set by Mike Jacobs, there will be two heavyweight contests staged next summer. It is his desire to stage the Schmeling-Louis fight in Detroit in June, and to follow that with the winner facing Jimmy Braddock in September. Of course, by leasing the Garden, Jacobs eased himself into the promotion of Braddock's next bout. Jacobs has the contract on Louis and will have it also on Schmeling, and the Garden holds the rights to stage Braddock's first title defense bout. But under the arrangements completed by Jacobs, the Braddock contract will be turned over to him and he will stage the championship mill, with the Garden cutting in both on the rental of its Bowl, if the bout is staged there, and on the profit.

***

Now for the story of the fight. It is a story of technique vs. clumsiness; of fists of dynamite vs. fists of clay; of sharpshooting vs. covering up; and of courage vs. fear. If you can visualize those in Louis and Baer, you will have a complete picture of the million-dollar battle.

Baer had received a terrible shellacking in the third and part of the fourth rounds. He took an awful beating in the first session when he threw everything he had in an effort to test the staying powers of the Negro, and he fully realized then, after a thrilling exchange, as did the 90,000 in attendance, that a knockout was certain.

Baer was so completely outclassed in every detail that Louis' greatness was



In the end, Louis' deadly left hooks and stinging powershots left Baer a dazed mess in front of 90,000 at Yankee Stadium. The lopsided victory convinced thousands of skeptics who previously couldn't see Louis as heavyweight champ to change their minds.

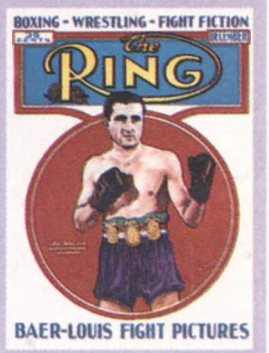
emphasized by Baer's sad showing. Louis took complete charge of the job when the gong sent him on his way and never but once let up until his task was completed—that of putting Baer out of the heavyweight picture and advancing Louis into the top rung of the challenger's ladder.

Louis' left hooks were deadly. His left jabs were cobra-like stings, and he poured into his adversary's body deadly right crosses that rocked the Californian almost from the start. Halfway through the first session, Louis knew that he was Baer's master, even if he hadn't known so before, and from then it was only a question of how soon Louis would end Baer's misery. When Louis went into that first round exchange after Baer had stunned him with the temple blow, Louis exhibited a type of fighting that made even his enemies—if he has any—applaud with vigor.

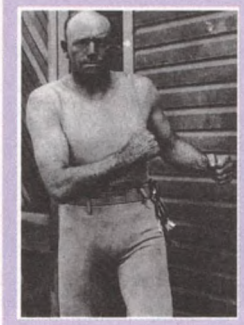
Louis met Baer at his own game, and before the brief rally had ended, there was Baer against the ropes, arms folded over his chest for protection, with a flow of crimson coming from his badly battered face, and Louis, his breathing scarcely noticeable, calmly pursuing the task ahead of him. It was amazing, because there were thousands of skeptics who couldn't be convinced that Louis could take it when the time came, but changed their minds after the display that caused Louis to break Baer's heart and to cause him to stop fighting.

The fight was over. "The Great Lover" had found his master. He had learned that wine, women, and song do not mix with an athlete's life. ■

THE RING, December 1935



The Cover: Lou Salica adorned the cover of THE RING by becoming bantamweight king with a 15-round victory over Sixto Escobar, but most of the issue was devoted to the Joe Louis-Max Baer heavyweight showdown. Before the era of TV, fights fans could always count on THE RING to give them a glimpse of what went on, and there was no shortage of Louis-Baer action photos, even though it only lasted four rounds.



Die Hards: THE RING took a look back at hardened champions who snatched victory from defeat. One example came when former light heavyweight champ Bob Fitzsimmons (pictured) was severely punished in his bid for the heavyweight crown against champion Jim Corbett. Looking close to defeat, Fitzsimmons recovered to win by 14th-round knockout.

Comeback Failures: Jack Dempsey appeared as if he would regain the heavyweight title in his rematch with Gene Tunney in Chicago. The infamous "Long Count" fight, however, ended a disappointing comeback bid by "The Manassa Mauler," keeping a string of unsuccessful heavyweight comebacks intact.

Canzoneri Survives: Lightweight champion Tony Canzoneri wasn't all smiles after battling young Al Roth in a tougher-than-expected fight. Roth was knocked down in the third round for a nine-count, but rebounded to rock Canzoneri in the fourth. Bleeding from a cut deep cut in his mouth, Canzoneri managed to retain the title with a 15-round decision.

Weighty Issues: THE RING chronicled the weight-making ordeal of flyweight champion Midget Wolgast, who had to drop 13 pounds in a week to make the 112-pound limit for a fight. It took four-mile morning runs and a vegetable diet to pave the way for a close victory over Small Montana.

COME OUT WRITING

Letters may be edited for reasons of space and clarity. Send your comments to Come Out Writing, The Ring, P.O. Box 1148, Fort Washington, PA 19034. Or e-mail letters to comeoutwriting@yahoo.com. E-mailed letters will include the writer's e-mail address unless a city and state of origin is provided.

POCKET POWER RETURNS

Wayne McCullough made a successful comeback with a second-round knockout against journeyman Alvin Brown in January. "The Pocket Rocket's" exciting performance in his first fight since October 1999 prompted reader Don Clements to say McCullough can be a junior featherweight titlist.

In January 2002, I watched the return of Wayne "The Pocket Rocket" McCullough. The former WBC bantamweight titlist blew out Alvin Brown in two rounds. This came after a two-year layoff from the brain tumor thing that almost ended his career.

My son, Brian Clements, a sparring partner for The Pocket Rocket, told me Wayne would be a world champion again. I recently visited Las Vegas and played a round of golf with Wayne and Brian. The Pocket Rocket was gracious enough to invite me to his workout. I have been a coach and trainer, working with the likes of Tommy "The Duke" Morrison and "Irish" Johnny Copeland. As I watched the sparring and strenuous workout of McCullough, I can assure the current junior featherweight champions that they should beware. Wayne will win one of those titles, no matter who he fights!

DON CLEMENTS
Joplin, MO

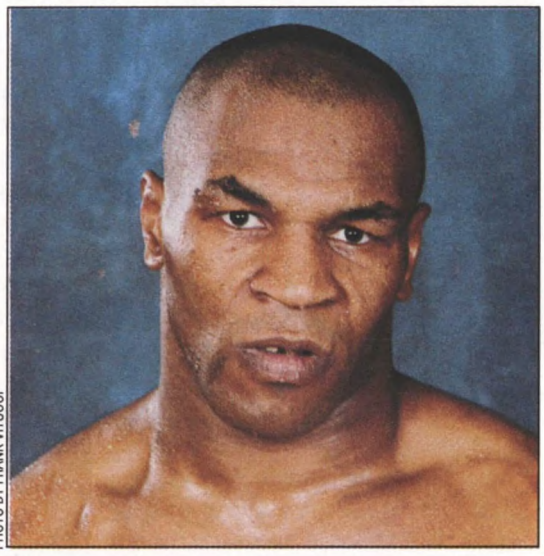


PHOTO BY FRANK VITUCCI

Mike Tyson still has an ability to raise the passion in boxing fans. Reader Gene Kelly says Tyson blew it when he ignited the press conference brawl with Lennox Lewis. Reader Ricky Flanagan claims TV analyst Teddy Atlas' judgment is clouded by personal feelings about Tyson.

ATLAS' SKEWED WORLD

I'm tired of hearing Teddy Atlas on ESPN2's *Friday Night Fights* keep insisting that Mike Tyson is afraid to fight Lennox Lewis, and that Mike will do anything to get out of the proposed match. Mr. Atlas is holding a grudge against Mike from their troubled past relationship. Atlas is letting his feelings sway his judgment. Teddy has stated this opinion on this matter so strongly and so many times that Brian Kenny, Max Kellerman, and others are starting to say the same thing. All fighters have fears and doubts about getting into the ring, but to say Mike is so afraid of Lennox that he doesn't want to fight is ridiculous.

Only Mike knows what his intentions were at the press conference announcing the fight. I'm not defending Tyson's many antisocial behaviors inside and outside the ring. He has always been that way, and he is not the first fighter to have such problems.

It seems the politically correct thing to do is bash Mike and call for his banishment from boxing. I just hope he can come to terms with his demons inside and help himself, not just as a boxer but as a person.

RICKY FLANAGAN
Tipton, MO

THE BADDEST ... OR THE DUMBEST?

Mike Tyson has to be the dumbest man on the planet. He risked blowing millions of dollars by causing a riot at the Lennox Lewis press conference. The Nevada State Athletic Commission won't issue him a license to fight in Las Vegas. If Tyson doesn't fight Lewis, he will have blown his chance to redeem himself and to be mentioned in the same breath as Muhammad Ali, George Foreman, Joe Frazier, and Rocky Marciano. Beating Lennox Lewis could have helped him as to where he stands among the all-time greats. But Tyson may have blown it again.

GENE KELLY
Anaheim, CA

GIVE EUROPE SOME LOVE

I'm very disappointed about the treatment Europeans are getting from your magazine. I feel your magazine is biased toward American, Puerto Rican, and Mexican fighters. There are many great fighters coming out of Europe and other parts of the world that never get any publicity at all. They are slowly grabbing many belts, too. A big article was written about Eric Harding (May 2002 issue), but why not 45-0 Dariusz Michalczewski, or Ricky Hatton, or Howard Eastman, or Vassiliy Jirov? Kostya Tszyu beat Zab Judah and unified the junior welterweight division, and never got a cover. Judah would have if he had won! These Euros can't get fights because people are afraid of them. I guess your magazine is, too.

TOM CECULSKI JR.
Cleveland, OH

INSPIRED BY THE GREATEST

I'm writing this to tell you about the effect the article "Ali Turns 60" in the April 2002 issue had on me. I'm of the younger generation that remembers Muhammad Ali as the guy that lit the torch at the 1996 Olympics. But I always heard everyone talking about him, so when I saw the article, I had to take a look. When I was done reading Ted Bodenrader's story, I was so inspired by it that I got up and ran circles in my 8' x 10' cell. I'm currently incarcerated in the King County jail in Seattle, Washington, but that still didn't stop me from doing circles in my cell, and it doesn't stop me from keeping up on boxing.

ALEX BREMMEYER
Seattle, WA

RUINED REID

This is in response to the "Reid Rooter" letter in the May 2002 issue. Reader Chris Smith says that he sees no reason why David Reid can't be a champion again. Don't get me wrong, I like David, and think he is one of the classiest guys in the sport, but I can think of a number of reasons he may not be champion again. Mr. Smith says he would like to see Reid face Antwun Echols. What!? Has he ever seen Echols fight? He gave Bernard Hopkins more trouble in their two fights than Felix Trinidad did. I think as an Olympic gold medallist, Reid was rushed along and got ruined. When guys like Reid get beat up by part-time fighters, they should spare themselves the embarrassment and start thinking about hanging up the gloves.

QUINN BLOOMFIELD
Lawrenceburg, IN

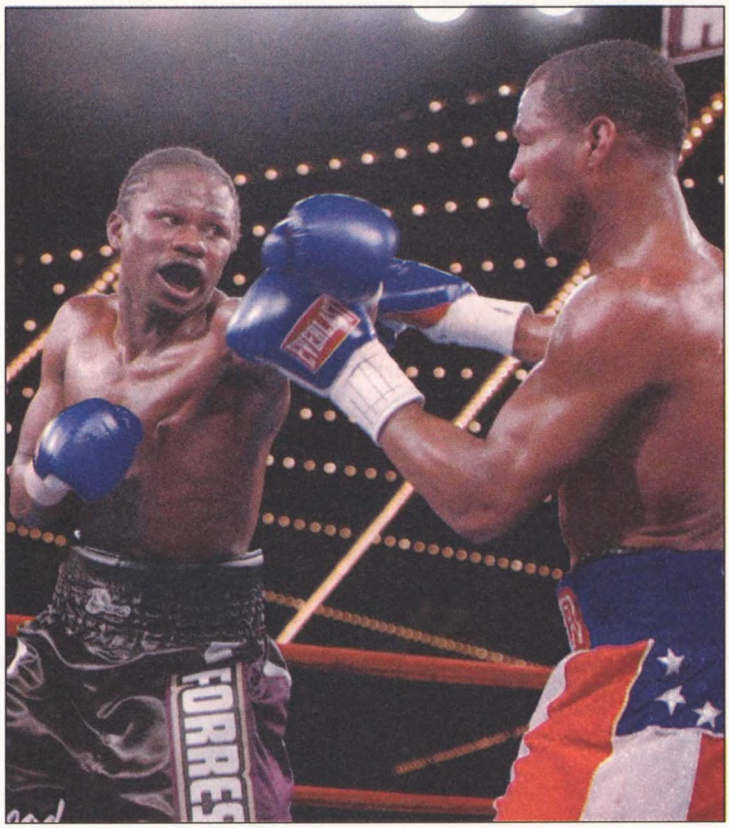


PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA

Vernon Forrest's unanimous decision victory over Sugar Shane Mosley debunked the myth of Mosley's invincibility, opines reader David Travis. Reader Anthony DeDona, however, says Mosley will be back.

FORREST-MOSLEY FEEDBACK

It's about time Sugar Shane Mosley was beaten. I think he has always been vastly overrated. He's been considered THE RING's pound-for-pound best ever since he beat Oscar De La Hoya in 2000. Mosley fought four times since then, against three bums and a man who finally got the respect he's deserved: Vernon Forrest. Forrest convincingly did what everyone said he couldn't do, and that's beat Mosley, even dropping him twice en route to the victory. Congratulations to Forrest for his impressive feat, and I look forward to seeing him fight in the future.

DAVID TRAVIS
Lentralia, WA

Being a big fan of Sugar Shane Mosley, I'll be the first to say that Mosley became unnerved after getting unintentionally headbutted and cut in the second round of his fight against Vernon Forrest. Mosley went from dominating the first round to almost getting knocked out in the second. I believe Mosley will rebound from this, because he is as pure a fighter as you'll ever see.

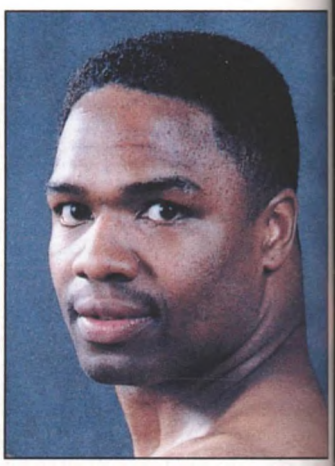
ANTHONY DeDONA
Ozone Park, NY ■

LOOKING AHEAD

By Eric Raskin

BYRD ON A WIRE

People throughout the boxing community rejoiced when **Lennox Lewis** finally signed the contract on March 25 to fight **Mike Tyson** in Memphis on June 8. There was elation from those who stand to make major dollars from the fight, and also from fans who have waited years for this heavyweight title showdown. Even at THE RING'S editorial offices, there was excitement and a good deal of relief in knowing that the fight being previewed in this magazine's cover story would indeed be happening.



Byrd: Waiting on Lewis-Tyson

But one guy who isn't too thrilled about Lewis-Tyson happening is **Chris Byrd**. The gifted southpaw from Flint, Michigan, became the mandatory challenger to the IBF title by beating **David Tua** in August '01, but the ensuing negotiations and delays surrounding Lewis-Tyson have made Byrd the most frustrated man in boxing. He's been pressing for his shot at Lewis since the Englishman regained the heavyweight title from **Hasim Rahman** last November, but the IBF has not enforced his mandatory, instead granting Lewis extensions while agreeing to sanction the big-money fight with Tyson. Byrd, meanwhile, has been idle, waiting in a tortured state to find out when his title shot will finally come.

"It's been very difficult, all this waiting, and now waiting even more. It's tough not knowing what's going to happen next," said Byrd the day after the Lewis-Tyson contract was finalized. "I like to be active. I wanted to box a few months ago just to stay busy, but everyone advised me to play it safe and wait because my shot was coming. But now that Lennox and Tyson are signed to fight, I *have to* take a tuneup. I can't go into a fight with anybody after a full year off. I'm sure that's just what Lennox's people want, for me to be rusty, but I can't just sit around doing nothing anymore."

Byrd was scheduled to ease back in with a four-round exhibition bout against **Nate Jones** on April 9, and after that he plans to take an official tuneup or two while he continues to wait. Unfortunately for Byrd, he still won't have a clue what the future holds until after Lewis-Tyson, because of the rematch clauses in their fight contract. If Lewis wins, he's allowed an interim fight (and if he wants to keep the IBF title, it will have to be against Byrd) before fighting a rematch with Iron Mike. If Tyson prevails, the contract calls for an immediate rematch, meaning Tyson will give up the IBF belt and Byrd will be left to fight for a vacant title, probably against the winner of Tua's fight with **Fres Oquendo**.

"At first, all I was concerned with was fighting Lennox because he's the man and I want the undisputed title," said Byrd. "But now, I just want to box, win a title, and then we can unify later. If I have to fight David Tua again, it's absurd, but it doesn't matter to me. At this point, I'll fight anybody. I'll be 32 years old this year; time is not really on my side.

"I don't blame **Cedric [Kushner**, Byrd's promoter]. The IBF has tied our hands completely. I don't think Lewis or Tyson really wants to fight me, so where do I go from here? It's frustrating, but I can't do anything about it except be ready when my time comes."

LISTEN UP

In other heavyweight news, it looks like **Hasim Rahman** vs. **Evander Holyfield** is a go for June 1, with HBO to televise ... On that same date, there's an interesting overseas fight, as **Thomas Tate** will travel to Germany for a rematch with IBF super middleweight titlist **Sven Ottke**. Their first fight, in September '99, ended in a controversial technical-decision win for Ottke ... Promoter **Bob Arum** is working on a very attractive summer showdown between junior featherweight champion **Paulie Ayala** and veteran contender **Wayne McCullough**. Between this barnburner destined to go 12 fast-paced rounds and **Erik Morales-Marco Antonio Barrera** II, you have to figure Top Rank is in prime position to bring home Fight of the Year honors for 2002. ■

McCullough: Getting a shot at Ayala?

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